

ALONG THE
HIGHWAY

EDMUND · G · SHANNON

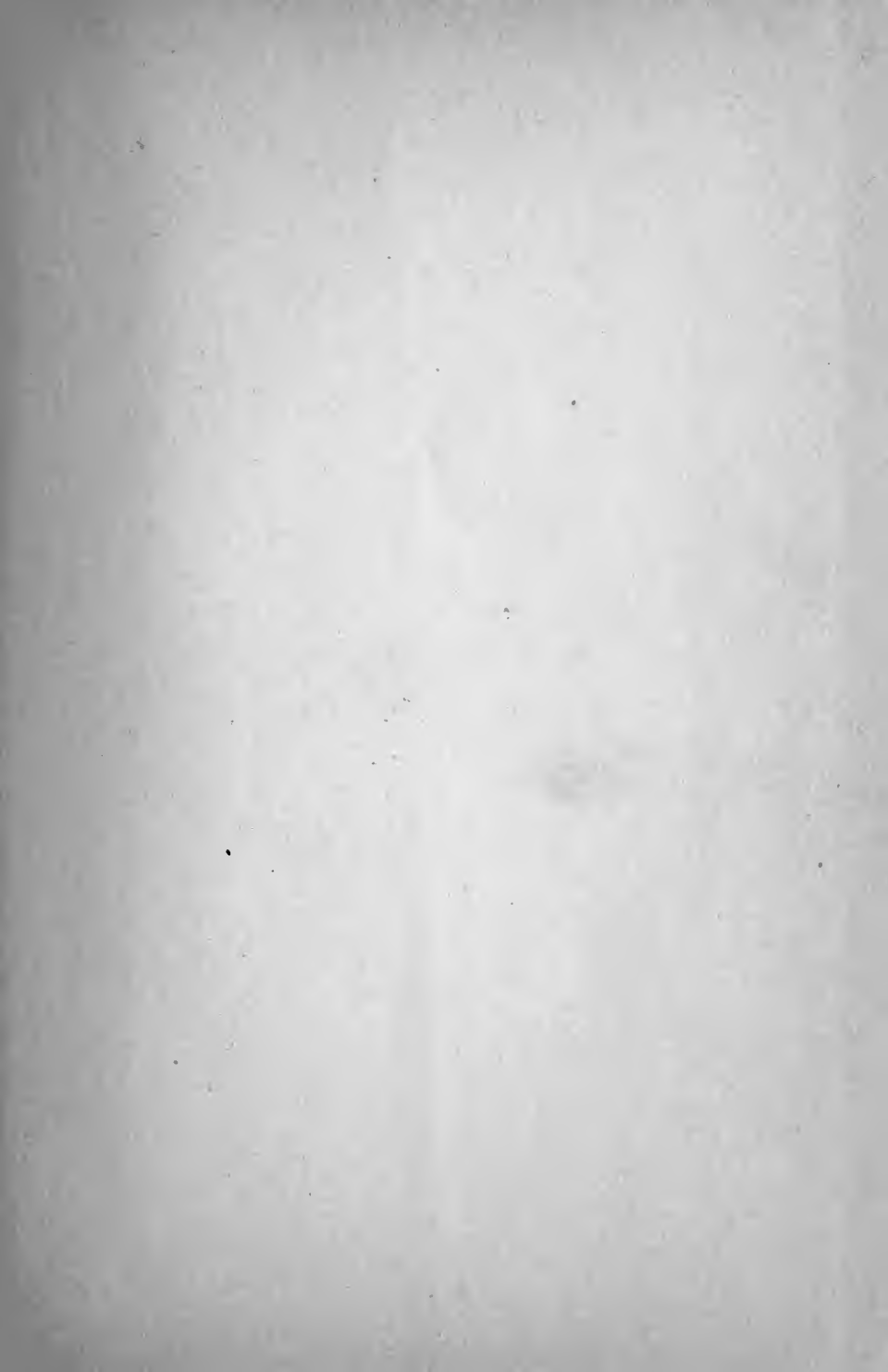


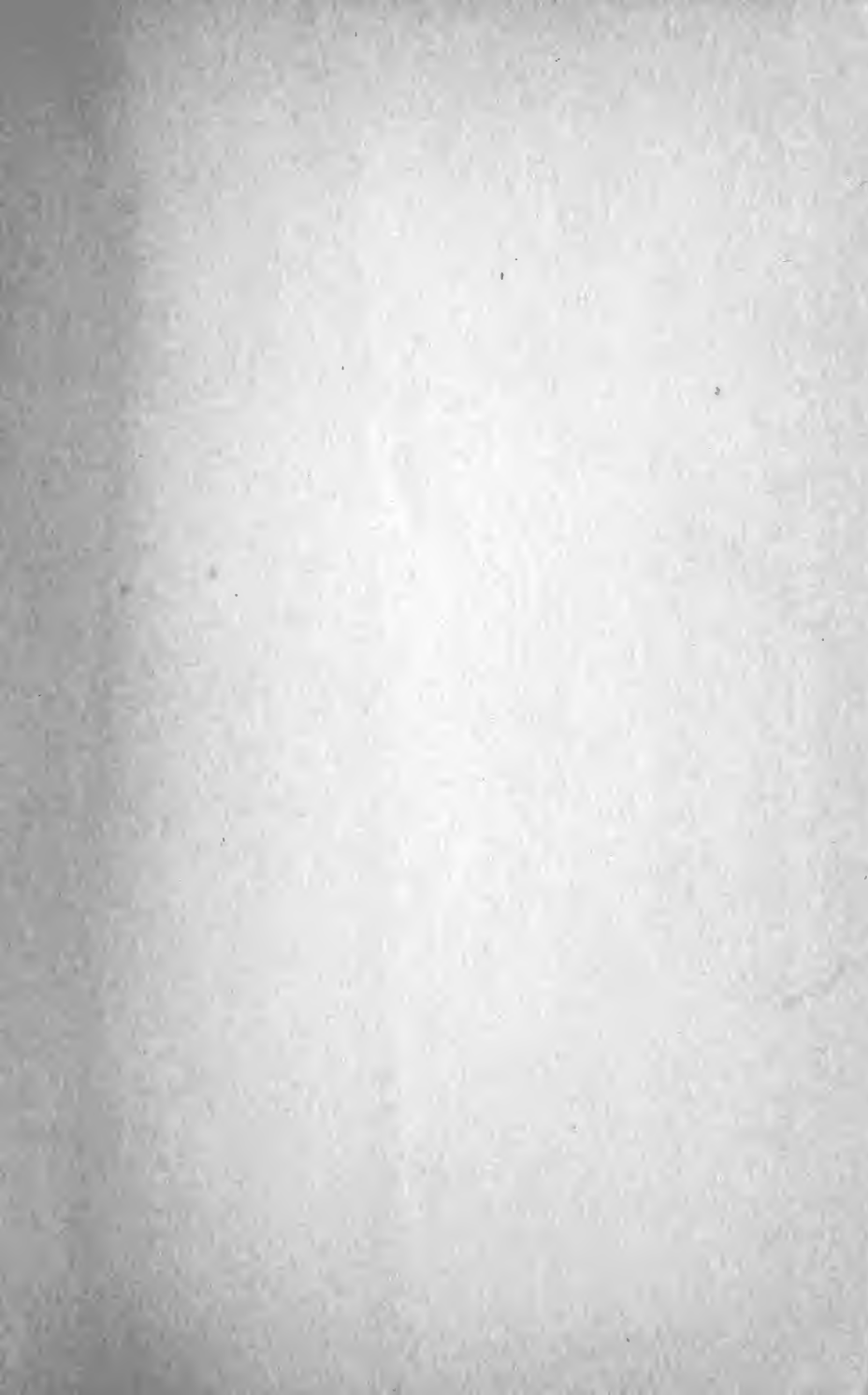
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ALONG THE HIGHWAY



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BY
EDMUND G. SHANNON



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DEDICATED
TO
MY MOTHER

CREDO

I hold that he who lives to eat and drink, or lay up wealth, or use a power, or lust for wanton pleasures, has made of each a god to set before him in his workshop, and time shall mold his soul to image them; and love and truth and faith shall pass him by. And on the other hand, that he who underneath the one bright start of love shapes his life to some ideal of faith or truth or charity, whether in song or art or deed, whether in smiles or words or prayers, — has made no idol, but found the one true God, and he shall be beloved of all mankind but envy — and who so live, alike are all of one religion. And these are the two religions of all mankind; and two who kneel and pray shall pray each one to his own God, although above them bends the self-same loft and though their lips repeat the self-same creed.

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CARAVANSERAI

WE kneel here in the dark and pray,
You and I, in our own way:
You to your God, and I to mine,
In the shadow of something divine.

We pray since we've learned to know
That the leaves will fall and the sun go:
Since we must die and would not die,
We pray to our God, you and I.

There is summer always somewhere,
The fee of sorrow and prayer;
So we pray with half heart, half faith,
Toil on somehow in the dark path.

"Our prayers are not heard," we complain,
"We are spending our efforts in vain."
Still our lips will tremble and pray
In a hoping, hopeless kind of way.

We are tired, we want to creep
In some peaceful harbor and sleep,
When the flush has gone from the west,
And the dead leaves swing in the nest.

To rest in the shade and be well,
With life at our lips, and the smell
Of incense, and self our theme;
So we dream an old man's dream.

At the door of death we dream.
We were young once and did not seem

To want so much; we were strong,
The cold winds did us little wrong.

Impatient of the cross and rod
We seemed not to need a God.
So we built us up love and a home
For the long days that had to come.

But death coming shoved the door,
And it opened, and a little more —
Our love had gone out in the night,
In the dark, but the stars were still bright.

So we spoke to God, "Who didst give
Unasked, us to love and to live,
Wilt Thou scourge us and never cease?
Canst not let us be in peace?"

Like the howls of a bitch for her whelp
Our cries were, and as little help.
Then we cried, "We seek our dead."
"You are fools," a still voice said.

"Yes, fools, but who made us fools?
Are we the work and the tools,
And the workman too, that the shame
Should lie with us, and the blame?"

So we left the empty forms
Of our creeds to rot and the worms.
We gambled with life, or drained
The glass while many moons waned.

"Let the women pray on their knees.
They can move mountains and seas
With prayer, they say; let them pray
At the break and close of day.

“Let them teach the children too;
They have nothing else to do.
Will prayer make a single sip
Of the cup more sweet on the lip?

“Those women with their beads who prayed
While we slept, whom we loved and laid
With the flowers that fell from their bloom,
With the rose and chrysanthemum:

“Who have slept ten thousand years,
Or one, and are dry as our tears;
Whose kisses we recall when the day
Meets the night and goes out their way:

“Who live in our dreams and when we fall,
Have never lived at all —
As dead as the graveyard sands,
And the pearls that slipped through their hands.”

And this is all to the tale,
That once on a time lived a frail
Girl, like a flower, with eyes merry,
And whose lips were red as a berry.

Whom we loved in the spring when the bush
Was like a woman's blush
With the rose, and love on the wing
Could find no sweeter thing.

And she loved Sir Galahad
She thought, but when all is said,
Though she made him a better man,
She really loved Don Juan.

What we called love at twenty and eight
Is folly at sixty and eight.

From the summit of forty and ten
We came down, and so are old men.

Our beards hang mourning now
Like winter on the bough;
Our green sins are gone, and we sing
Psalms when the church bells ring.

If we could like garments shake
The pallid skin and the ache
Of the bones quite off, and bloom
Like a plant in the dead leaf's room,

I'm afraid the priest would bless
Many hoary mourners less.
Ne'er a leaf grew sere in June
But it fell a little too soon.

Which is to say, the over-good
Have not too much of life's blood;
And this I have learned from the fields,
What was sown the harvest yields.

When I drink too deep, or desire
Crops out with its red blooms like fire,
I know, why a fool can read
That some hand has passed with the seed.

If the commonest florist prize
What he sows, he will sterilize
The ground, so the weeds will not sprout
When growing time comes about.

A child will not curse the soil
If the weeds make vain his toil —
And if cockle be found in me,
Surely the Reaper will see.

I know too that as man nears
His lease of a hundred years,
When he's faint of ear and eye,
That the weeds shedding will die.

I have lived all the seasons through
But winter, and the dew
Of another spring, if it fall,
Shall find me over the wall.

If the laws of that land permit,
I shall ask for leave to sit
Beneath some heliotrope sky
That the full moon passes by,

And pick the days I like best
From this life, love and all the rest;
Throw aside the books where the wise
Have writ down their foolish lies:

As a man, when the night watch is o'er,
Seeing in the chink of the door
The shadow of morn, puts away
His lamp and goes out in the day;

Or to wander hand in hand,
By a strip of opulent land,
With a friend, and renew old themes
That died in this world of dreams.

How the times have mended apace,
What friends are in this or that place;
How was found more good than evil
In some one we sent to the devil.

I've come back the way I went up
With the hearty song and cup;

I drank life to the dregs, now I meet
Those going up with swift feet,

With youth in their palms like a stone
To throw away. My own
I cast in the stream Delight,
And the stream swept it out of sight.

When I blow out like a lamp
On some foggy night, when the damp
Winds creep from the marsh—I have gone
O'er the way to search for my stone.

Then come let me advise,
For I shall be two worlds wise,
Say the priests, and surely they know,—
It is their business to know.

The lips that taught me this,
To kneel in prayer, to kiss
A cross, that nothing above
Or below is like Christ's love,

Have been mute for twenty years.
She said her final prayers
Like a child, and lay down to sleep,
With the cross, in Christ's faith and keep.

Ah, the day that I learned to know
More than she! Now the cold winds blow
With a rattle from the desert of death,
Nor have so pleasant a breath.

Each night when the day goes out,
From the dark I hear a voice shout,
"In the time of thy youth remember,
Lest forlorn be thy life's December."

And another, "I went with thee, brother,
By thy side through fire and smother;
I stung thee through many a kiss,
And the cup made less sweet for this."

And others, bacchanalian shouts,
The ghosts of midnight routs,
Cry clamoring, "We wait
For thee at the swing of the gate."

Ah, well, the cards I have —
I played at the table — Chance gave
Them in the deal: laugh or sigh,
One must play and then must die.

Poor man! If he chance in a rut
On a dark road, or his foot
Strike a stone and he fall, is it well
To say he has stumbled into hell?

Your religion has quite crammed
You with need that I be damned;
Cry, "The devil!" we're in one boat,
Pray, "our God," you would cut my throat.

Should religion teach us to kill
That was made for love? Or fill
The bankrupt soul of man
With more crimes than the devil can?

Knee service, that's all. Let it go,
We will not wrangle, nor sow
The seed of discord lest
It shall break on our future rest.

From the past that was like a cloud
I heard a voice calling aloud —

Through the rolling time it ran,
And was echoed by ev'ry man.

'Twas age looking back from its goal
Through the past. "Reverse the scroll —
We remember youth forgot
A thing or two and a blot."

Let it go scratch not the sore
That has healed lest it hurt you more
In the op'ning. You 'scaped with some pain,
Might you suffer less again?

Brush away these cobwebs, give ear —
Let the world boil, we'll rest here
On the greensward with a glass
Between us, and the fresh grass.

Let us reach out like roots for truth
In the loam. Put this nut to your tooth;
A serpent was carved on a gate.
He writhed in flames and spat hate.

And his coils were on the skulls
Of men, and he burned their souls.
A black form stood at the gate;
Men shuddered and called it Fate.

A wall of night like a cloud
Ran up to the gate and lowered
Eternally. 'Neath their breath
Men said, "Take care, this is death!"

They were pressed by an unseen might,
Gibbering like monkeys with fright,
To the hissing snake, the fire pond,
And the horror of something beyond.

"You men, what are you about
In the rear! Bear, back, let us out!"
They shriek. Cry others, "Pray the sun!
Get help! Something must be done!"

"Moon and stars! O earth!
Some power that gave us birth!"
Cry others at a loss,
"What means that man with the cross?"

"Can he help us? Help! Too late!
All is dark—we are through the gate."
Trembling, some would say,
And laughing, pretend to be gay,

That over the wall is a host
Of glad friends we counted lost;
Laughter and music and lights,
And a wonderful order of knights.

Hand in hand with some old love,
We move up to the Grand Knight above,
Get our spurs and the shibboleth,
And laugh, "So this is death."

While the sparkling world is turning,
And we pass the sky ports and the burning
Lights, we admire what we see,
But our earth we love passionately.

They made wine here, good wine too,
I drank it, what else could I do?
And women were there to my hand,
Why the whole thing seemed so planned.

This dear old wine-shop where all
Are drunk more or less, and fall

More or less, they say, long ago
God called good, and we've found it so.

I was a vessel, a mug
Of clay, empty till the drug
Of life from the bottle's neck
Was poured wine red to my beak.

And I sang; why, I knew not;
In a breath I was cold and hot;
Many vessels fell in twain,
Were broke and were clay again.

Now the webs are about my beak;
To-morrow I shall fall and break;
And the shop will be as gay
As it was another day.

See this hand full of dust;
Do you feel any wanton lust
At its sight or its touch? Yet I think
I have kissed this dust. Do you shrink?

And why? Are not here the eyes
That loved, the lips whose sighs
I drank, The breast divine
That rose and fell on mine?

Here the hair as the water flows
Rippling, and in it a rose?
This hand full of dust is the same
In another form and name.

The licking winds scoop up
The rivers in a cloud cup,
Squeeze out the juice of the flowers
And send them back in showers

For to-morrow's buds. So take
These vessels of ours that break
When the winds come out of the sky
Despite us and drink them dry.

Will this drug of life rain back
To-morrow in some cup, to make
A new season, to give the same joys
To other girls and boys?

These passions never die
Though the vessels broken lie;
In new time they'll come with the turtle
Dove and showers of myrtle.

Passion plays and the storms sweep,
Or the worlds smile, or they weep —
In our opium smoke we ask why,
Conjecture a while, and die.

But let us back to our prayers,
Our paters and aves. Time wears —
Our abstraction ravel out
Their work with fingers of doubt.

With the priest Night in his black
Striding cassock we toil down the track
Of seventy years, while we go
Back alone, halting and slow.

I hate the night; voices speak
In the night when I lie awake.
Give me light and color, and a ray
Of sunshine opening the day.

My hours were mostly in the sun,
For I taught my feet to shun

The paths of the clouds, and my cross
I twined with ivy and gloss.

"Set down the glass," some one said.
"Mix tears with your meat and bread,
For you know not what gift of sorrow
May lie in the hand of to-morrow."

"There is time beyond," I replied.
"Shall I be boorish and chide
That I have good heart to-day
When to-morrow I never may.

"Yet were times and times again
When my spirit for sighs was fain;
And I said, not wanting strife,
And very much tired of life,

"Between the fev'rish strain
For gold and barter for gain,
And the fear of want and the shy
Of sins and the devil, and to die,

"And fever, and ague, and fire,
And water, and thunder, and the ire
Of God, who can say that his birth
Is a thing to be glad for on earth?"

But then there's a heaven to pay,
Somewhere, some time, where men play
At being gods, they tell me,
And I feel the propinquity,

Even now with my gray old head;
I feel coming the youth that has fled
Somewhere before me. "Take hold,"
It says, "you are not old."

I have lived when I knew not,
I shall live when I know not,
Whatever else the fates give,
This I know and always—I shall live.

Over there in the churches they sneer
At their brothers, some smooth chin'd seer
Damns us. Peace, brother, peace!
We have suffered, and lacked in grace.

When a man has been abroad
And come home, we ask him the road,
And he tells us so and so;
Thus we make sure how to go.

But if I ask his son,
Or friend, or the hundredth one
That has heard of the way, my advance
All wrong shall like as not chance.

I have not in my life heard,
Or seen one who came back from this road
Of death, to inform the rest
Of us which road may be best.

“So, however much I may want
To know the way, I have scant
Information; perforce I must
Take what they tell me on trust.

“Then who is to settle the cost,
When I do my best and am lost,
If the Master let these signs stay,
That are apt to lose us our way?”

Why are men so eager to burn
The souls of their friends? Let us turn

This over to God, Who foresaw
All things when He made His law.

When He made all things that move,
Being glad, not for hate but love;
When He planned for the bird and his mate,
Surely for love, not for hate.

Let us not be beetles and brain
Ourselves against the white pane.
When the windows ope it may be,
We too shall pass in and see.

There is no great fault in this plan
Of things. Yesterday I ran
After folly, 'til weary of fun,
And to-day I rest in the sun.

A nurse, as she fingered the stitch,
Spun tales of an Eastern witch.
As I ran my laughter increased
At this tale of a witch in the East.

For I saw the East and West meet,
And heard the earth's heart beat
Ev'rywhere the same; I played
By the Sphinx, and where M'hammed prayed.

Nothing suffered but had its release.
And the night came calling "Peace,"
Where the Cross streamed in mystery,
And Pagoda looks East to the sea.

Once in frenzy I tore my hair,
Cursed life, cursed fate in despair,—
Then some power soothed me and smiled,
And crooned, "Sleep, poor child, poor child."

So I slept, and with morning's bloom
I laughed — Again it shall come
When my last night's shadows creep
About me, and whisper, "Sleep!"

Let us go, then, as readily.
What we shall wake up to be
We know not, but this we know,
That good things to better grow.

There is no chrysalis knows why
He becomes a butterfly;
Nor larva, nor cocoon,
Can foresee his glory next June.

We can see the stars, not their laws,
We can see the flowers, not their cause —
But the death! We tremble and sigh,
For we do not want to die.

How we shrink and turn to our saints,
Our Madonnas the dreamer paints.
Looking out of Egypt with eyes
That are dim and weary of lies.

Across the white sands to a man,
We have come in the caravan.
Our beards to our belts have grown,
Yet the palms are a little way on.

They are always a morning's march,
While the wide sands behind us parch,
And our burdens grow. Shall we doubt?
What good! There's no other way out.

This caravan that began
With the making of woman and man

Must go right, since it goes by the law
That some of our fathers saw.

The law of the Caravaneer,
The great Leader, Eternal Seer;
He showed our fathers the way
And the caravanseraï.

Let us rest and be on again
O'er the undulating plain
A small way. It can't be far
To the one confirming star.

A poor old child man I be,
And have never been able to see
Quite well, any more than you,
What was always best to do.

We would fret like a cross gossoon
For the silver points of the moon,
And seemed never to know that the things
We most wanted had venomous stings.

Yet this an old man can teach,
If you will come where the reach
Of the hand of the sun is warm
And the bird has no thought of harm.

Who made this world so fine,
Had a heart as kind as mine
Or yours, whatever they tell
Of His wrath and the fires of hell.

In the churches the walls are so close
And man-built that I seem to lose
These lessons, where women come even
To divide our worship with heaven.

But alone in the church of the sun,
Where the leafing boughs have begun,
And the stars will come out soon
One by one with the reigning moon,

For my short, failing eyes
To wonder at — How the skies
Put our weakling wisdoms to flight
In the immensity of the night!

Musing where a million bells
Are tinkling, and the incense smells
In the censers, swung with the breeze,
All my spirit is on its knees.

What spidery temple spun
By man has a dome like the sun!
Come with me and leave these piles,
Pigmy frames with pews and aisles.

When they ask what the old man taught,
Tell them this, though they count it naught,
Love all things. Therein is the key
To many a mystery:

Love greatly and broadly, nor forget
When carelessly it is met,
To go on and love, not less,
But more, so you learn blessedness.

Now when the wind blows o'er
The coop of my hand, and no more
Of light is left but to show
You I lived and died, even so;

Make no great to do of that,
Nor grow a whit less fat

Of mirth, as I know you will not.
But if passing by the spot,

In some summer shortly after,
Which they call my grave, and your laughter
Checks a moment from thought of your end,
Not enough that your knee will bend;

Take this mem'ry of me; was here
One who did work his share
Of evil and go out with a debt
Of sins uncanceled yet;

But who went less in fear than grief,
Since he held firmly his belief,
That the spirit in his breast
Always loving what was best,

Even with tears, and his kind,
And all things, God will not blind
With sheet fire and cast astray
In the world where hate holds sway.

Have we said our prayers? Well, our lips
Were moving like idle ships;
And you dreamed your dreams of the wine
Of youth and I dreamed mine.

Now the day has flown an arc,
Like a bird that comes out of the dark
Of a room. The East and West meet,
A great crowd has come in the street.

From here in the Temple hard by
I can hear the men's voices cry
For drink. If the glass be full,
What pressing need to be dull?

But an image as gray as mine
Casts a shadow even in wine;
No matter, fill a glass for me,
A Sazerac let it be:

Hold it up, so the soul of youth glows;
Drop the glass! How the bold spirit goes!
When my spirit goes thus, so you may
Sweep the broken vessel away.

MY QUEEN

WHEN ev'ry one shall turn to his own home,
And this wide world, forgetting and forgot,
Shall leave just thee and me alone beneath
The stars to dream and hallow one loved spot,

My queen, thou shalt no tribute ask of them,
Nor I a thought from any maid or man.
What more than hand in hand beneath the stars,
With God in Eden as the world began.

Then God shall send his cherubs to thy breast
And crown thee with the glory of a son,
And they and I shall worship 'round thy throne,
Strong armed and true to make thy will be done.

CRY OF THE SOUTHERN MINSTREL

WHO has struck the living strings
Of thy harp, my native State?
Who has heard thy eagle's wings
Rushing fearless to its fate?
Who has seen thee in thy ire,—
Bard, is none, to catch thy fire?

Minstrel spurn this lethargy!
 Feel the frenzy of that past;
Rise and strike the fetters free,
 Brooding silence long has cast
'Round the splendor of her name
And forgotten harp of fame.

Rise and sing us yet one song,—
 Tell of men to glory born,
Of the pure and true and strong,
 Fill thy song with stinging scorn
For the base that live in shame,
Dead to virtue and to fame.

Sing of men with purpose high,
 Men that can't be bought or sold,
Men whose lives are not a lie,
 Godlike men with hearts that hold
Simple faith to love's command,
God and home and native land.

Where are they, and why so still?
 Are they deaf or blind, or what?
See they not the land is ill?
 Will they stand unmoved at that,
Let the deadly scourge increase
So it breaks not on their peace?

O you men your mothers bore!
 Can you, then, so soon forget?
Men that children, wives, adore,
 Can you then, so soon forget?
Ah, these women! By God's will
They shall save our honor still.

No land yet was ever lost
 That had daughters fair as they.

Though in blood we pay the cost,
We shall have the price to pay,
By their virtue, by their prayers,
By their suff'rings and their tears.

Yet our honor's all but dead,
And the soul of glory flown,
Leaving hopeless gloom instead,—
To some bolder, brighter zone.
When I think of what you were,
What you were and what you are,

Madness fires my soul like wine,
Sets a braver spirit free,—
When I think you were divine,
When I dream you still might be.
Wake, my country! Spread your wings
We shall rise to brighter things.

'Cross Grand Rio take me south
While I dream of great deeds done,
Let me get it from the mouth
Of some idler how was won.
Buena Vista, go you hear
Of the things to which you're heir.

Richmond, speaking for her dead,
Answers back to Mexico.
Where such deathless heroes bled,
Can the living fall so low,
Thus to shame with souls unmoved
This fair land their fathers loved?

Better trackless wastes of yore,
Better laws and arts untaught,
Better savage bathed in gore,
Than the shames that we have wrought.

Strike the laurel from her brow!
There's a curse upon her now.

Hang the harp on silent walls,
Fold the shroud about her gloom;
For her sun of glory palls
And her fame is on the tomb
Where her warrior heroes lie.
Gods can such names ever die?

Can their children mate with slaves?
Find a deeper level still,
Fall beneath oblivion's waves,
Lose their white man's soul and will
With some brutish octoroon
'Neath the passionate southern moon.

Why so still? Does none deny?
What, not one? No single knight
Dares to give the tale the lie?
Dares to boldly stand and fight?
Rise, O dead, and let the sky
Ring with your wild battle cry.

Men who died with zeal devout,
Faced the hell of belching guns,
Rise and send them howling out —
Slaves with slaves and half-breed sons —
You who fill such honored graves
Cannot give your blood to slaves.

GARDEN FANCIES

WHAT shall I gather to give her?
Flowers, come teach me your tongue.
Which of you voices the passion
That was old when Eden was young?

Roses, you're flesh with the fleshy,
You appeal too much to the eye;
Lily, your exquisite fibre
Was cast too pale in its dye.

Oh, but there's a breath in the garden
That's the very essence of love.
Does it come from the soul of my flowers,
Or come from a garden above?

It steals in my spirit's casement
Like a lamp in a darkened room.
In the morning I strive to find it
And offer my love through a bloom.

But it wings away from my garden
As the sun flashes round the sky,
Leaving one star at evening
And I cross where the shadows lie,

And kneel at the warm stained railing
In the cliff scarred mountains of time,
Where the day heat passions are fading
And show in the heavens sublime.

And all the sweets of my garden
Curl upward against the sky,
With incense soft and splendid,
To the shrine where my love dreams lie.

My garden is white in the moonlight,
With a whisper of doubt in its leaves.
There's a dream form there by the fountain's flow,
Where the fragrant jasmine weaves.

She walks with a movement pensive,
Her cloak a diaphanous cloud —

Her going as soft and sweet as the breath
Of a rosebud thinking aloud.

Is it flesh of my flesh that I tremble?
Is it blood of my blood that I ache
To be but one with her, body and being,
That Heaven may mold and break

The form, and our souls escaping,
Like perfume from dead gone flowers,
Rise up one spirit perfect in bliss
With all of eternity ours?

And I follow along by the fountain,
Always a step behind;
By the sweet ribbed violet beds in the dew,
By the beds the narcissus bind.

Always a step behind her
'Til the pastures, oak studded, lay
With a lace of moonlight and leaves before,
And behind me an empty way.

For the form is gone of my dreaming,
Like the odors I strive to grasp;
And only the mantle of moonlight is left
Like her veil slipped loose from its clasp.

The world will tell you there's nothing true,
And love is lost in a day.
The world will tell you that gold is its god,
But these are the things the flowers say.

Many maidens will tell you their man is false,
With a lifelong debt to pay —
And many a lad has plucked a thorn,
But these are the things the flowers say:

From the daisy I find that you love me,
From the violet you are true;
But the red rose is your passion,
And the white rose, love, is you.

The spotless soul of the lily
Looks up to the morning star,
And they tell to one another
How stainlessly pure you are.

The cherry says you are constant,
The moon-flower asks of the moon,
Was there ever another such maiden
Or a flower as fragrant in June.

And one and all they tell me
With their fingers on my eyes,
That love is the vessel that holds us
And the world is full of lies.

When the stars are up above me
And the flowers in the hedge,
There's a crack in heaven's window
And the key is on the ledge —

For you are in the garden
Where the moonbeams pry and peak
And the rose breaks through its petals,
Thinking to hear you speak.

Sometimes when the flowers are here alone
I pace the fragrant way,
And question the deep, true depths of your soul —
But these are the things the violets say:

You are so true,
That if you
Should fall asleep
In the sleep that is so deep
And men call death,
This I know,—
That from your eyes would grow
Violets, you are so true.
And if you
Were not so true
To me, dear love,
When clods are packed above,
And I a clod long since,
Still from my tomb
The bleeding hearts would bloom
If you were not so true.

Daily I send you something
From this garden quaint of mine,
Petals that whisper fondly,
Or tendrils that cling and twine.

Daily I send you something
To tell you as well as it can
The sweetest little secret
And the tender heart of a man.

I send you cherry blossoms, ah!
Cherry blossoms, they will say,
They will speak and say
To the ears of your soul
The words I never may.

Ah, love, ah, love! my heart has grown
them,

My tears have kept them fresh and wet,
My lips have met
To kiss them through the night,
Lest your heart forget.

I send you pansies,
Love, only kiss
The buds if they droop,
And they shall not miss
The sun or the spray
Of the midnight dew,
But finding their heaven there,
Shall drink of your lips
And live anew
With fine scorn of the garden's care.

I send you pansies,
Love, only wear
Them close to your breast
And they'll nestle there
To tell you the thoughts
That blossomed in mine —
For none knows like the pansies do
What you are to me,
And none can divine
Like the pansies how I love you.

And so, through the rain and sunny hours
I'm filling your life with love and with flowers.
And after the sunset I come to pray
And to hear the things the flowers say.

To dream of you while the whippoorwill
Flutters from the shadows over the hill,
To dream of you while the flowers pine
And murmur your name to the stars that shine.

Ah, dreams, they will still be coming
When I'm gray as the moonlit cobwebs there!
To twine in the rosy warmth of your fingers
Or nestle in the shadowy braid of your hair.

Though my dreams diverge and vary,
And there come as many faces as flowers
With each its several rare old fragrance,
Forget-me-not faces that charm me for hours,

This glorious girl of my garden
Is my spirit's best and mellowest wine,
And my pleasures are almost bacchanalian
When I think of claiming those lips for mine.

The old god with his measure of nectar
Drinks his pledge and holds the moment divine,
But my soul shall drink of a rarer vintage
When the lips of this sweetheart girl are mine.

If a thousand miles were a moment,
And travel were quick as the heart's desire,
The witches could bring from the pasture their
caldron
To the gloom of my garden and light their blue
fire.

For there'd be no knight to guard it
If a moment's space would carry me there
To the star that shines so far and dimly
In the east and makes my dreams so fair.

Come into my garden,
Come, dearest, to-night.
Come into my garden,
'Twill thrill you with delight.

For its spices are wafted
On pinions of love,
And attuned all its voices
To the throat of the dove.

Come into my garden
And adorn thy rich throne,
Ere the winter has sered it,
Ere the blossoms are blown.

Oh, the flowers are lovely,
All the fruit of my care,
Grown by a lover
For some one to share —

Grown for a fairy
By a fairy's slave.
Come, or the garden
Will change to a grave.

Roses and pansies,
Forget-me-nots too,
Ox-eyed daisies
With diamonds of dew —

Violets, violets,
The sweetest of all,
And the willow is weeping
Over the wall.

Come into my garden,
Pride of my sight,
Come into my garden,
And complete its delight.

Ev'ry step you take, dearest,
Is a seed in the dust

Of my heart, my garden,
Come, girl, you must.

She is coming, the fireflies follow her step;
She is coming — the trees over head
Stir from their dreaming and scatter their pearls
O'er the path where her dainty feet tread.

She is coming — the south winds whisper it low,
And their murmurs the haughty rose vex,
For the red bud pales and its sweets grow faint
By the fairest fair of her sex.

She is coming — the skies were never so deep,
Nor the voice of the night so still.
She is coming, and all that is good in the world
Like handmaidens wait on her will.

She is coming, my darling, 'mid summer blooms
best,
With a crown on the brown of her hair,
With a crown that Heaven has fashioned for her
And my love placed worshiping there.

She is coming fairylike,—tremble, O love.
Music had never such charms
As the fall of her step while I wait here alone
In the dusk with my outstretched arms.

She is coming, roses, bow down your heads.
She is coming, night, curtain your eyes.
Be reverent all, while my spirit adores
This vision so fair from the skies.

She is coming, fond heart, thy choice, she is near;
Away to thy place at her side,

And drink from her eyes twin fountains of bliss,
'Til thou'rt drunk and drowned in their tide.

But the form at the fountain has vanished.

Ah, no! she comes not to-night:
Though the spell is all of her weaving,
Though the garden's light is her light.

Not to-night will she come, nor to-morrow.

Ah, rose, you need have no fear!
When she comes your leaves will have fallen,
And the bush will be ragged and sere.

Hectic tints will show in the forest,
And a sweep of leaves and rain
Will come robbing the wood of its beauty,—
And a rattle of sleet on the pane.

And my garden will be a snowdrift,
And a dream of daffodil,
And a warbling bird in the springtime,
When winter has had his fill.

But more than a dream will my hearth be,
With this golden-eyed girl for my bride;
By the roaring red of the hearth-fire,
We two sitting side by side.

Ah, then she will come, my flowers,
And there'll be no winter then,
Though the snowdrift freeze on the hillside
And the sharp ice cover the fen.

We shall watch the sparks in the chimney,
With my dreams all gone to rest
So near that they need not wander
To the girl I love the best.

We will need the whole long winter
To fit for the spring our nest,
And then you shall bloom for me, flowers,
And the girl I love the best.

KATE

WHEN the winds of the wood are calling, Kate,
And October's leaves are falling, Kate,
It seems so queer
That you are not here,
And no one comes when I call Kate.

You used to be always laughing, Kate,
So gay and eternally chaffing, Kate.
Then why should I, pray,
Be weeping to-day
When you never wept in your life, Kate.

Oh, you were so very clever, Kate,
And would do for a friend forever, Kate,
And ask for no pay,
For that was your way,—
Unselfish as days were long, dear Kate.

To share what you had you were ready, Kate,
Always, and so true and steady, Kate—
And I've seen you run
From sun to sun
To serve all first and last serve Kate.

That sorrow may never come near you, Kate,
But that love and plenty may cheer you, Kate,
Is the prayer of your friend
World without end,
And all of my heart goes with it, Kate.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

'Twas in the last December —
Ah, how well do I remember!
Somewhat glad and somewhat sighing
I heard the din of merry bells
For the old year lay a-dying.

Ding dong! a happy New Year —
The glad notes swell and fall —
A happy New Year, happy New Year,
A happy New Year to all!

A witch on the winds was flying,
And the old year lay a-dying.
No shadow then of sigh or sorrow,
For the mad, glad world was drunk with
dreams
Of the wonderful year of to-morrow.

In all the great, wide city
For the dead there was no pity.
And I alone with a heart to remember
Sat brooding and thinking, "Ah well, ah
well!"
My joy was in you, December.

And to-night as I sit here sighing
While another old year is dying,
The world may go mad with joyous en-
deavor;
But I know what the dead year held for me,
And I know it is gone forever.

Ding dong! a happy New Year.—
The glad notes swell and fall.

A happy New Year, happy New Year,
A happy New Year to all.

JUDGE ME NOT

JUDGE me not by the things I say —
For how can you,
Knowing not the silences,
Make your judgment true?

Nor yet by the things I do; for these,
Some grow from the stern
Old Must that ruthlessly drives
Though my heart break and burn.

Oh, judge me not at all, my friend.
Give your love to hide
My weakness and try to see
My tortured heart inside.

VERITAS

IF Thou art hurt by tears of those Thou lovest,
As tears of those I love hurt me,—
If on Thy shoulders burdens that Thou givest
Increase a million-fold to burden Thee,—

If Thou dost know the hunger of the hungry,
And helpless want to give them meat and bread,
The hurts, the wrongs, the wants of all creation,
Hast known and must 'til ev'ry man be dead.

And if the love Thou givest all eternal,
Younger than life and older than the stars,

Comes back to Thee turned sneers and wanton
coldness

In hate, in crimes, in wickedness and wars —

If Thou must feel the failure of Thy purpose,
To Thy command the answer bellowing, "No!"
The temple that Thou build'st about Thee top-
pling,

And sighing say, "I made it thus and so,"—

If friends of hell ensnare Thy best creation,
Thy imaged likeness carved of joyous conceit,
And Thou from heav'n canst but thunder curses,
Helpless, upon the victim of defeat —

If even in that vaunted peace of heaven,
Thy bosom's friend scoffed at Divinity's rod,
And traitors made the flower of Thy kingdom,
That could not judge between the less and God —

Lord God of things as we poor people see them,
Teach us the things of God that really are,
Lest tangled creeds that sicken understanding
Disgust our faith and try our souls too far.

LITTLE GIRL O' MINE

If you could come and kiss me,
When I'm sort of tired and blue,
I'd brighten up and freshen
The way the flowers do
When it rains.

Could you put your arms around me,
And your little hands in mine,

And come and stand behind me,
I shouldn't fret and pine
'Bout little pains.

That's all I seem to care for,
Little girl o' mine,
That's all that I'm a-wantin'
And never yet a sign
Of hopeful days.

But sometimes when I'm dreamin'
I seem to feel the touch
Of your lips and hear you whisper
That you love me very much,
And will always.

THE DEVIL'S PIPES

DANCE, if you will, I'll meet the cost,
Though the devil the piper be.
It's nothing to you so dance —
And leave the payment to me.

I had not cared to make the debt,
For I liked the sunny road,
By the hedge that bloomed and piping things
And sky as deep as God.

There a man might have his soul's desire,
With never a reck'ning day.
But the devil came by with his pipes, and you
Would dance, and I must pay.

So dance and dance, and peace to your heart
When you come some day to see,
That the music you boasted of paying for
Was bought with the soul of me.

PASTORAL

THE FARMER'S MORNING

SWEET silence waits in dark confessional,
The drowsy birds are dreaming of the moon,
The reedy tinklings beat in dewy dell.
The sudden watchdog bays and stops as soon.

From some far pine on gloomy hill's high crest
A great owl squints and hoots the coming day;
And whippoorwill, soft chanting by her nest,
In dismal woods is hills and hills away.

Now in the east the flounces of the morn
Are fluttering; a thrush's gutt'ral now
Proclaims the infant day from slumber born,
By glad hearts welcomed and the rustling bough.

Here o'er a path, where leaps the timid hare,
Some mocking-bird in flush of myrtle tree,
Some poet, learning how to love, lays bare
His little heart with happy piety.

The woods are somber where the floating mist
Hangs like a veil, that only half conceals
The modest maiden blushes in the east,
Whose rosy beauty dawning light reveals.

Along yon road, that winds its way to town
Through verdant pastures and by tillaged fields,
A stooping figure moves with careworn frown,
Blind to delights that lovely nature yields.

Each early morn by this accustomed road
This stolid sire of ignorance must toil,—
Upon his shoulders labor's sweaty load,
Less man than beast, mistrusted with a soul.

With rough mahogany of hand and brow,
With apelike forehead and distended nose,
'Tis his to guide the undulating plow,
And scourge his sons along the cotton rows.

The brand of slave is on him where he goes.
Now warblers from their nightly haunts repair.
And breaths of fragrance from the mint and rose,
And jasmine blooms are in the morning air.

Anon woodpeckers, at their lusty trade,
Cry shrilly, rousing all the peaceful grove;
And on the shelving side of distant glade
Half mournful coos some pretty maiden dove.

The cow expectant calls her bleating young,
The while her homeward way she slowly goes,
Snatching the tender clover with her tongue
Where richest in the fields it rankly grows.

And lo! the pageant of the coming day!
A wave of gold sweeps through the silent pines.
The sun is up and every dewy spray
Becomes a jewel where his splendor shines.

'Neath yonder shade of oak and evergreen,
Just catching sparks of sunlight through the
leaves,
The green gray shingles of a roof are seen,
With tufts of moss about the battered eaves.

The blue smoke rises from the crackling fire
With hazy peacefulness. A morning's song
Now meets the pleasant toil, as hopes suspire
From dreams and rest to cheer the whole day
long.

A housewife, queen in miniature domain,
Prepares the morning's plentiful repast.
A thousand cares are hers; to soothe the pain
Of infant ills, that follow youth so fast;

To guide the baby feet, and when they stray,
To lead them back and kiss them well again;
Working with angels that their small souls may
Grow fair as lilies and as free from stain.

Where e'er they go, sin, suffer as they will,
Or pointed at with scorn, or rich or proud,
Her mother love and care are with them still —
She stands between them and the wrath of God.

Around the kitchen door the rank and file
Of haughty geese parade with noisy scorn.
The strutting gobbler spurns the earth as vile,
And thinks himself the only beauty born.

These also are her charge, and well they know,
These feathered frauds, how easy 'tis to cheat
Her gentleness with cries of want and woe —
Their craws crammed full and yet disposed to
eat.

The lord and master, well contented too,
Laz'ly saunters by the garden walk;
He notes the melons sparkling in the dew,
And heavy fruitfulness of vine and stalk.

Near by the orchard stretches into view,—
The juicy plum, the peach scarce turning pink,
From which the jaybirds claim their ample due,
Or thrush or crow or noisy bobolink.

Here in these apple trees, whose sour fruit
Is now no bigger than a partridge egg,

The hopes of future crisp brown pies recruit,
Served hot, seasoned with spice and ground nutmeg.

Or roasted apples sputt'ring on the plate
With sugar browned; wholesome delights like these
Come crowding on his fancy, cheer his state,
And stay his step beneath the apple trees.

Another promise of the summer days,
The rip'ning fig in purple lusciousness
Would tempt a king to stop and sound its praise,
And rest beneath its ample shade's caress.

His heart is large with kindness and with cheer.
His orchard bears alike for rich and poor.
No cost so large or selfish need so dear,
To turn a hungry beggar from the door.

Nor yet so humble, but on wintry nights,
When warm the fire is burning on the hearth,
In tales of chivalry his soul delights,
While claim he makes of noble line and birth.

How sire of his was shot at Bloody Lane,
How Gettysburg had drained his uncle's life;
High deeds, that from his flashing eyes distract
Admiring tears for those that fell in strife.

Then, growing mellow as the mem'ries flow,
His fancies turn to sunny days of peace:
Old quarter songs and tales of long ago
Told o'er and o'er, still entertain and please.

Some faithful slave, long dead these twenty years,
Enthroned by love, still claims an envied place

In these fond tales and tributary tears,
Despite the lowliness and humble race.

Though at his stern command and haughty mien,
The timid negroes, half in fun and fear,
Skip from his path in dread of being seen,
To laugh and prank behind his awful ear,—

Yet, when oppression brings its tyranny,
Or skel'ton want its scant, unwholesome fare,
The master's shoulders lift the burdens free,
The master's board divides its plenteous share.

So lays he up for gray-haired heritage
A quiet conscience and unsullied name.
Each day turns back of life a well-filled page,
With small recorded folly, naught of shame.

Like rock-ribbed harbor tossing into spray
The angry waves crashing against its base,
And men who hear them by some summer bay
Hear only murmurings that sound like peace;

So he stands guarding manfully his home.
No breath of shame has ever entered there,—
And when the wranglings from the world do come,
They sound like dying messages of care.

So faint and far away they only breathe
A moment's melancholy music's strain,
And, dying, haunt the mem'ry through their death
With something like a pleasant thrill of pain.

Let politicians sell their little faith,
Or lie a thousand times to get one vote,
Place on hypocrisy a laurel wreath,
And tell their virtues that they have by rote;

Let royalty kill its heart with pomp, let wealth
In frenzied finance lose a man his soul,
Let crafty natures lay their plan of stealth,
Or money-lenders reach their damning goal;

Not all their vaunted wealth, success, or power
Can buy the peaceful joy this good man knows.
And when they've fretted through their peevish hour.
With God begun; they've lost him at its close.

Not so with him; his kindly face is set
Towards the rising and descending sun;
Gold's not his god, nor lust for it can fret.
His pride,—a well-spent life, a duty done.

No home of broken vows, damning divorce,
Daughters besmirched and sons of lewd address.
The law of nature here has still some force,
And fashion ne'er has seemed to make it less.

Here is a mother counting wealth no gain,
Counting a noble life of toil no price;
So that she makes the path of duty plain,
Counting no cross too great, no sacrifice.

The gossip clubs, where heartless slander rules,
Soft silks cov'ring a tiger's vengeful mood,
And silly tongues of some poor gadding fools,
Spreading a tale that soon may end in blood;

For these she has no time, and if she had,
Her simple life, her holy love for home,
Devotion to her children and regard
For charity, these all pronounce her doom.

She has not style enough — a bitter shame —
What though her brain is rare as polished gem,

Her character like marble, such as fame
Delights to sing, of which all good men dream!

A harlot covering her nakedness
With silks, and wanton heart with lying speech —
Dame Fashion gently passes up the mess,
Where virtue plainly clad can never reach.

But turn the picture; it were shame to make
Further comparison. Let's take some other,
As one who from the thought of such would speak,
First breathes a prayer and tells you of his
mother.

The sun like some enormous golden kite
Has cleared the limbs of yon encircling trees;
And fussy toil, that slept throughout the night,
Has kicked the oxen from their sleeping knees.

Across the fields the master rides away,
Still in his heart the parting kiss and words;
In touch with all that nature has to say,
His soul harmonious with the songs of birds.

And like the birds that gather 'round the nest
And sing their slumber songs so peacefully,
When twilight's nursing calls them back to rest,
So underneath the shelt'ring roof and tree,

When evening comes, shall come this family,
And sing their evening songs and look up high
To the stars, give thanks to Heaven happily,
And sleep and dream beneath a peaceful sky.

DEATH

BETTER, far better than any wish I ever made —
Dreamer of dreams that I am, they lose their luster
and fade,
I that carried a candle, you will give me a star,
Death, when you come and show me what manner of
life you are.

THE EARTH

A BUBBLE, where He who made it,
And blew it into space,
To please Divinity's fancy,
Looks and sees His face.

TWO WORLDS

TO-NIGHT there is no glamour in the sky
The world is but a shop and common place;
My restless thoughts with restless limbs keep
pace;
For happiness in past or future try.

To-morrow what a change shall come to pass!
God's holy light shall hang in this old dome
Of earth, and ev'rywhere will be my home,
For waking I shall look into your face.

IF YOU LOVE ME

If you love me, why, then, the spring
Is warm beneath the winter's wing —
And though the flower buds be bare
A breath of fragrance lingers there,
If you but love me.

If you love me the moments fly
Like swallows on the wing and I,
On wings of thought as light as they,
Go flitting round you all the day,
If you but love me.

Unless you love me, though delights
Of budding days and dreamy nights
Be 'round me — though the song-birds sing
And boughs be green, yet 'tis not spring,
Unless you love me.

Unless you love me kingly gain
Has no more worth than wind and rain.
Though princes pose as half divine,
I would not give for their lot mine,
If you but love me.

THE CALL OF THE DEAD

(In Memoriam, Irene Shannon.)

I CAST myself down on the ground
In the grasses and white clover tops,
Where the bees gathered their crops
Of honey. Stung by the droning sound
Of their wings and the murmuring trees

To the consciousness of a sere
And blight in the verdant year,
I wept as I watched the flight of the bees.
For the book of life lay apart,
Where a blot was dry on the page,
While vague suggestions of age
Were feebly helpless somewhere in my heart.
The clover blossoms and bees
They seem so far away
And yet they are here to-day,
With the scent from the full-blossomed china
trees.
How strangely, distantly sweet
With their breath are the meadland winds,
To my soul that willowy bends
In the clover bed where the steady beat
Of the busy wings goes on.
But they all seem things of the past,
And a shadow its going has cast,
From a brighter way where the past has gone.
I can't see how it can be
That the bees and the clover blooms
Come back again from their tombs
With the year, come back again to me,
And she, the pulse of it all
With a spirit gracious and brave,
Lying out there in the grave,
Can never hear nor come at my call.
These tokens I shrink from to-day
For they hurt my soul instead
Of pleasing. They speak of the dead,
The dead, to me in their pitiful way,
And I must forget. Forget? —
I could laugh, if I were not sad.
Ah, death may forget and the dead,
But life has too much of memory yet.

For the clover tops will speak,
With the busy bees and blooms
That the year has brought from their tombs,
They will rise each day from the shadows and
seek

For the sun of the presence that lies
Eclipsed by the planet of death;
But all their beauty and breath
Never more shall excite the soul in her eyes.
In the busy rush of the day,
In the Midas mania of the street,
Where Judas and Mammon meet,
And my heart harks back from its better way;
I seem to forget a while,
And the lights go out from the hall
Where grief hangs over the pall,
And mine answers in kind the world's false
smile.

Or is it that the undefiled
Cannot follow, but watches afar
Where the bees and the clover blooms are,
With the longing, innocent, eyes of a child?
Love is so foolishly sweet,
Ever anxious it is to deceive
Itself, to make believe
Like a child at toys, and credit its deceit.
I have plucked the china flowers
From this old tree year after year,
For they seemed to bring her so near
That she touched and blessed this world of
ours.

The sweets came from the dress she wore
And her eyes, like the flowers, were blue,—
'Twas tearfully sad since I knew
That ne'er while I lived should I see them
more.
To-day I have only the cross,

Those foolish whims have fled
And left me alone with the dead,
To morbidly count the infinite loss.
Isn't it strange, that of all the earth,
There is nothing to take the place
In my heart of this missing face?
The want of it beggars the plenty of mirth,
Comes stealing like a ghost
At all places and times to my side:
When most I think to hide
From it, it is here and chides me most.
I walked in the crowds of a city,
In the hive of human bees,
And loneliness was like a disease:
For in all of the crowd there was no pity,
Only heartless laughter and jest.
And I found myself staring ahead
In vain for the face of the dead,
And turning I fled from my crazy quest,—
Came back to the fields to sit
In the grasses and clover tops,
Where the busy bees gather their crops
Of honey, and twittering swallows flit.
For she will be there, I said,
Her spirit will fold over mine,—
Surely she will give me a sign
Through the friendly blooms that she is not
dead.
But the kind old soul of the wood
And the flowers have failed me to-day.
The sunlight beats on the spray
Of the clover leaves, and the purple blood
Is at rise in the china tree.
The sun and summer rain
Have come to those that were fain
For them, and peace to all but me.
What comes to me that is good

From the arms of mother earth?
A sigh that has its birth
In my heart and dies away in the wood.
For, smelling the breath of the flowers,
And hearing the voice of the trees,
My longing is like a disease,
For the beautiful April days that were ours.
Oh, heart, will you not be still?
Will you hunt me to death with the dead?
With the sting of a hasty word said,
That was never meant, but it makes me mad
To think, if man knew in time,
How a kindness left undone,
Or a hard word spoken in fun,
May grow to haunt the mind like a crime.
If I had another chance —
Poor fool, art thou dreaming still
So fallen and flat thy skill,
The dream of a Knight with a broken lance?
Ah, well, it is we have dreams,
Else how could we live at all
With our ears ever full of the call
Of the dead? One could not resist it seems
To me if it were not for cheating
The reason with nursery rhymes,
With the hearing of unheard chimes,
And the sweet romance of a future meeting.
Faith was wise when it taught
That man was never a slave
To death and the bonds of the grave,
But lives again in a brighter thought.
And so, may I hold since I deem
Life useless without some prayer
That shall lighten the weight of my care,
And build me a hope to fit my dream;
That as the grasses of May
With the leaves and the clover blooms

Come back again from their tombs,
And the sun comes back to a better day;
So she in a greater way
Shall come back to me, or I,
On the earth or somewhere in the sky,
Shall go to her in a better way.

MARY

AH, could you hurt me now, lass?
I can mind how often
Wee small cares of mine, lass,
Made you melt and soften.

We two would stroll the meadows
And shun the woodland dreary;
I was the prince of thistles
She the garden fairy.

She was the truest lassie
Ever earth did carry,
False might prove the seasons,
False could not be Mary.

And when she grew to blossom,
I a foolish lover,
Trembled lest the breezes
Hurt her passing over.

The roses had no flower,
Not a bush a berry,
Heaven not an angel
Fair as was my Mary.

They came and took my lassie —
Fresh the braes were budding,

Wild rose blooms and jasmine
All the green hedge studding.

I sit and watch the braes now,
Hedges sweet and sunny,
Ah, but they are wretched,
Once so blithe and bonny.

Wide as all this world is,
Ocean, mount and prairie,
In it all and through it,
None I love but Mary.

QUATRAIN

My soul is somber like the pines —
Your soul is like the sun that shines
Upon the pines and drives away their gloom.
You teach my lips to smile, my heart to bloom,

LOVE THE GIFT

THOU dost not truly love,
Unless thou canst forget
The all he owes to thee,
And never count the debt.

For if thou stint in giving,
Or charge him more or less,
That is but love of self,—
Not love, but selfishness.

ON THE TAKING OF THE PHILIPPINES

A DREAM OF PROPHECY

'Tis writ that all that's fair must fade,
The vulture fills his hungry craw
With what was once in beauty made.
I dreamed, and in my dream I saw
A vision and a prophecy,
That which has been, that which may be.

Out in the west there lay a land,
Hills, valleys, spread from sea to sea.
No footprints scarred its rugged strand
Except the prints of liberty.
The eagle's nest, the red deer's trail,
O'er rocky wild and wooded vale.

Its sons were reared at Nature's breast.
They bent the bow and threw the spear,
Fleet-footed, bound on danger's quest,
Their hearts were never tamed to fear,
But nerved their sinews strong to dare
To grip the tiger in his lair.

Then westward came the strange pale-face
Who brought the arts of peace and war,
To chain the spirit of this race,
To give them terms to make their law.
They yield, but yield alone to death,
They could not draw a fettered breath.

And on the red man's trodden bones
Another nation took its rise;
The makers of a hundred thrones,
Who taught the arts which civilize.

And breathing still the same free air,
Liberty smiled and settled there.

It grew, and from the east came hordes;
With wolvish greed they eyed its wealth,
They measured justice by their swords,
To take by force, or take by stealth,
It was their way, they did not reck
To find in one so weak a check.

Then shrieked the eagle, wild and shrill.
The war horse's neigh, the trumpet's blast,
Sent echoes back from hill to hill,
And England's troops recoil, aghast.
From Cowpens' flows a ghastly flood,
And Monmouth's plains are red with blood.

Rough was the shock and fierce the fight,
And failure threatened prophecy;
But steady forward shone the light
That ever beamed on victory;
Unconquered sword of Washington
The dawn of Freedom's rising sun.

And then I saw where wilds had been,
Through which in sterner times had passed
These weary, reckless, failing men,
All chilled by breath of wintry blast.
Rich cities fertile fields athrong,
A nation truly great and strong.

While thus she stood in all her pride,
Without a rival or a peer,
Counting her sons from tide to tide,
Forgetting soon the price so dear —

Our brave forefathers paid in fee
To buy above a slave's degree.

She turned the strength waxed powerful
Through tears and bloodshed of the free,
While in her infancy, to cull
A weaker's hopes, for slavery.
And in the Golden Gate amazed
Stood Liberty and westward gazed.

As there she rose, her arms outspread,
Displeasure in her wondrous eyes,
And heaven's glory 'round her head,
An angel stepped from paradise:
A melodious chord broke on the ear,
Sweet, high, and wonderfully clear.

"Columbia," she cried, "my child,
From such a seed what can you reap,
But bitter fruit in kind?" And wild
The eagle shrieked above the deep,
A black cloud rose up threat'ningly,
And there I read my prophecy.

A PRAYER

LORD GOD, if I have sinned,
Surely I have paid the debt,
With tears, with anguish of heart;
Take the price and let me forget.

Burn my heart to a crackling crust,
Crush my bones and set
Thy cross on my quivering flesh,
But only let me forget.

WAY OF THE CROSS

THY absence is my cross, dear love,
And life without thee Calvary.
I gladly take the cross and try
To bear it so each pain may be
A prayer for thee, sweetheart.

Each day fulfills the sacrifice,
Each hour distills the bitterness
I drink to make thy anguish less
With lips that pray and yearn to kiss
Thy tears away, sweetheart.

O wasted lives in hopeless want!
O precious soul and countless loss!
Yet love, that holds our hearts so close,
Makes sweet the bearing of the cross,
For thee, for thee, sweetheart.

MOTHER

I FEEL to-day all that I owe to thee,
Standing midway between life's two extremes,
The wonder of it, power to foresee —
See and remember.

This world a rose unfolding perfumed dreams
To golden tongues of melody and strains
Celestial in sun or soothing beams
Of love's begetting.

Dear mother heart, through your enduring pains
And trespassing e'en on the land of death
I have these things, these sweet companion gains,
Laugh and am happy.

How many bitter blades have found their sheath
In thee that turned aside had been my own
And pierced me through and sharply cut my breath
Drinking in pleasure.

Dost thou remember, though the days are flown,
How I would bring and lay before thy eyes
My childish treasures as before a throne
Queen, for thy notice?

See, now I hold the sparkling cup I prize,
That Time has crushed the grape of pleasure in,
Thoughts sipping from it like spring's butterflies,
Sipping all summer.

Yet could I teach thy lips, oh, Mother mine,
To drink it, not a drop should wet my tongue.
Time's hand should bring to thee two cups of
wine,
Heav'n still another.

Alas! when once the aged hand has hung
The empty beaker in the church of time,
And once the blithesome song of youth is sung,
Comes there no other.

Thy girlhood's beauty and thy witching prime
Of loveliness have lost their summer's blush;
Yet spring's not all. I've seen more tints sub-
lime,
Mother, in autumn.

These thoughts are sad; sigh not. Come, let us
brush
Aside regretful tears. Thou canst a while

Stand by my side and taste the grapes we crush
'Spite the to-morrow.

The usual cross old Age but seems to smile
On thee, as if his God had bid him see
How well the elements of goodness fill
All of thy nature.

Could I once tell thee what thou art to me,
How beautiful thy eyes that now are dim
With shedding tears when I might seem to be
Somewhat less happy.

My heart is like an organ and a hymn
Of thankfulness to thee each happy day;
And all the days are happy to their brim,
Knowing I have thee.

My heart has cracked and crumbled part away,
Yet 'round it climbs the ivy of thy love,
And if I weep, 'tis really but in play,
Let us believe.

One prayer I pray and all my hopes approve,
May Heaven lead thee softly here below
With sweet foretaste of sweeter things above —
Guide thee with angels.

But never from me mayst thou further go
Than I can reach somehow and feel thee near,
Lest all my heart be lost in void of woe
Losing thee, Mother.

SONNETS TO A LADY

I

THE DEDICATION

SITTING in this ring of percolating smoke
From love's sweet incense, wide my eyes upcast,
Like some old priest that moaning on the past
With oft-told, soul-tongued prayer and nettle cloak,
Does penance praying, ever on the stroke,
By his fond, fearful, reck'ning of some vast
State beatific; while the cold-tongued blast
Beats on the temple chilling shrine and crook.
So sitting I have reached and caught these dreams
From out the smoke of love that wrapped me 'round.
So chance it may that I shall never see
One dream fulfilled of sad or sweet extremes,
Too great for one so very near the ground,
Yet hold them out I do, my dreams, to thee.

II

Again the path of Phœbus northward tends.
The modest snows his eager suit dismiss,
Preferring death to his defiling kiss;
All else more carnal with his passion blends.
When last he came, the spring source that now
sends
Its stemless torrent through me was submiss,
Controlled, a gentle font of regnant bliss;
'Tis now my master, shaping all my ends.
I did not think, sweet one, when first I bent
My head to thee in mock servility,
That some day thou shouldst hold supreme control
Of all I am; that I, most impotent
In thy weak hands, should at thy mercy be,
Thine unredeemably body and soul.

III

Last night the soul of music spoke in strain
Of most compelling power, life inspired
Arose sublime, and all its being fired,
Forgot that it was doomed to death's sharp pain.
Thus lifted to my most superior plane,
I vowed next day with this new force acquired,
To pen a line to you that all admired,
Should be your person's glory and my gain:
To-day the spell is numb and I am clay:
The weakened sense of greatness, then so keen,
Has with the music died; the earthy veil
Just for the gracious moment torn away,
Obscures my vision's limit and the sheen
Of last eve's fancy grows a sickly pale.

IV

What a most marv'lous craftsman art thou, friend!
See yonder man who claims superior sense,
With all his cumbrous line of implements,
See how he works and sweats to gain his end.
Thy methods his do wonderfully mend —
Thou buildest both thy house and sustenance,
With skill and ease that shame intelligence
Of man and all his vaunted boasts transcend.
But tell me this, canst weave a mesh whose thread
Shall captive take a struggling lady's heart?
If this thou'lt do, I'll make thee lord and king
Of spiders. Thou shalt have before thee spread
The fattest flies and right to ply thy art
In all I own without a reckoning.

V

Abide, sweet Time, here shalt thou tarry, yea,
While yonder blue-stained, star-embroidered sphere

Pours down one precious draught that love holds dear.

Yea, shalt thou tarry in eternal May,
As dear and needed as red lips that pay
Love's boon. Ah, dearest Time, grow never sere
And old, nor teach thy eye to drop a tear
Lest we stand struck and murmur "Lack-a-day!"
For this in thee, O Time, the 'vantage fair
No trebly blest eternity can show.
Since my fond love whose heart is in the breach,
And hurls grim, scaling griefs back into air
Is mine in time, and yet did she but know,
With soul to soul, what might the knowledge teach?

VI

I'll paint a picture of my Love, I said.
And straightway all my soul, to frenzy wrought,
Fine canvas stretched and brush and colors brought.
My fancy drew the outlines of the head,
And then I fell to worshipping instead;
When lo! an angel stole betwixt my thought
And me, and at my heart a demon caught
And wrung it white with whisp'ring, "She is dead."
Ah, Death, thou couldst not do so wrong. Attend;
Bury the sun, and let men's minds go blind,
With groping. No, thou wouldst not do that,
Death.

Then wouldst thou bring to so untimely end
My sun? Ah, never, Death be so unkind,—
Leave her and blow on me thy autumn breath.

VII

Come nearer, love, so rapturously near.
Embrace me closely like the trunkless vine
Whose clinging tendrils live on what they twine
That none in all God's star-bound bowers shall hear,

But He alone, while in thy secret ear
I breathe a message for my Valentine,
Whose sweet import, by any ear than thine,
Were deep profaned, it is so sacred, dear.
Ah, now, be there a need for any speech?
No; silence hath a softer, sugared tongue
Than poesy. No, speech were artifice.
Thus lip to lip, life ebbs from each to each,
And all the rhymes by lovers told or sung
Were wind-blown straws to one long lover's kiss.

VIII

Ah, mocking-bird, wilt sing, and shall not I?
A day just gone, when winter held in death
All life, thou wert so stupid, not a breath
Of song hadst thou nor any heart to try.
But spring has come, and love's o'er-happy sigh —
Thou art the harpsichord that answereth —
A flower-song for flower underneath,
A ripple for a ripple in the sky.
And shall not I, O mocking-bird! voice too
My deepest soul's accordant melody,
Since love has come to me that came to you?
So my heart strings in no less high degree,
By this one flower's sweetness thrilling through
May answer it in love's soft minstrelsy.

IX

Sonnet, I would that I could strike thy keys
With all the magic of a master hand,
Like echoes heard from distant wave rocked seas'
Eternal music throbbing on the strand,
That like to it in ages yet to be,
Containing charms for ev'ry ear's amaze,
All men might linger on my minstrelsy
With raptured grasp of thoughts that live always,—

So I might teach to earth and sea and air,
And make men's hearts beat wild with worshipping
The noble worth and beauty of this Fair
My earth bound muse so languishes to sing.
Ah, then, from feeble notes and discord free,
Thy soul should ever her acclamer be.

X

Come, pass the torch of life to me, my love,
And help me cheer the places that are dark,
I've brooded long upon the glow above;
For oh, the world of it has not a spark,
And life is weak and trembling from the death
Its enemy has aimed to reach its heart:
Afraid yet loathing ev'ry baleful breath
That heavy bears despair and stinging smart.
Oh, pass the brand that means so much to me,
Of all that man has need of here on earth,
Love and its fair attendant prophecy
Of home delights, of bed and board and hearth.
Unless some light you give, a lover's smile,
Some token from your eyes, life's scarce worth while.

XI

How sweet the morn to weary watching eyes
When night's cold fogs ascend on tinted wings
Like butterflies, and heart-locked sorrowings
Grow calm and borrow hope from sun-lit skies!
How like the morn, that blooms and beautifies,
Is this loved messenger of thine! it brings
Into my heart a flood of light and swings
A radiant world upon my glad surprise.
Life is not all a cross, for though we weep,
There still is given even through our tears
Some glimpse into the golden realms above,
Some promise mirrored in our souls so deep

With light of hope, and yet none soothes and cheers
Like this, a token from a heart we love.

XII

When angels pluck thy roses, steal the light
From thy bright eyes to decorate thy throne
In heaven, and thy spirit aged and lone
Tarries in cheerless mansion ere its flight:
Will then my love like beggar parasite
Turn traitor and its early vows disown,
Forsaking thee whose treasures it has known,
Some newly pleasing fancy to requite?
Ah, no, thy monument my heart shall be,
Enscribed with thy young beauty's epitaph,
Monument scarred in its enduring trust,
Yet lasting as the stone-carved memory
That baffles peevish Time's destructive staff,
Until the marble crumbles in the dust.

XIII

The day was made for work, necessity
In its hard light stands skel'ton like and bare:
Man's peace is blinded by the golden glare
Of wealth or frightened off by penury.
But when my dreaming eyes can scarcely see
The flitting bats, and swallows home repair,
And something more than toil seems mankind's
share,—
That time of all is sacred dear to thee.
In ev'ry starry gleam from blue-veined brows
Thy spirit seems to be a light-winged guest,
And pensive voices whisper only this,
"She loves you," lisps from the moon-lit boughs,
And ev'ry breath that filters through the west
Leaves on my lips from lips of thine a kiss.

XIV

Go bring the flowers of the summer past,
That blushed upon thy breast some months away,
The withered roses that were worn and cast
In Time's eternal shade, and bid to-day,
Their shrunken, leafless stems to bloom again.
Go melt the hoary frost from bush and briar,
And coax with sun and rippling sweep of rain
The fragrant leaves that breathe of sweet desire.
If this the magic of thy charms can do,
Perhaps my heart may warm for thee once more —
If thou canst make the frozen 'cicles dew,
And living blood to lifeless things restore —
The bloom of love, thy summer looks once fed,
Thy wintry breath has chilled and love is dead.

XV

Love's not dead, it only sleeps like a child
Tired out with weeping for the mirrored moon,
That seals its lids 'gainst grief to some old tune
Crooned by its cradle side, and all the wild
Heart yearnings are at peace and seem as mild
As sunset paintings in the lap of June.
So love unreason'ble fretted for a boon
Beyond its reach, till sleep its want beguiled:
But come, you, dearest, in the morning hours,
Or in the long white heat of noon-day's wane,
Or in the taper-lighted twilight time,
And love shall waken all its dormant powers
To lisp thy name and smile on thee again,
Though heart be hoar and head be flecked with rime.

XVI

My farewell thought ere dark-robed Slumber draws
The curtains o'er my eyes and screens the glare.

Of life, are snapped while ling'ring 'round the rare
And hallowed dreams of which thou art the cause.
My waking consciousness through morning's gauze
Of painted fogs, shunning the nets of care,
Flies straight to thee, to breathe its morning prayer,
And there its living inspiration draws.
Thou art the sun of dawning and midday,
The crescent of the evening, stars that shine
And please,—all have their seeming worth and glow
From thee. My pensive hours, my grave and gay,
Thou givest all. The healthy vines that twine
Around my heart from thee would never grow.

XVII

Were I an angel poised at heaven's gate,
Lonely in bliss, forsaking all my kind,
My willing wings I'd spread earthward to find
Thee, love, thy slightest grief to console.
And when those gentle lips should supplicate
The throne of Mercy, I would storm the Mind
Of Heaven, both our pleadings intertwined,
Till thou shouldst get thy wish in teeth of Fate.
But being only man, and that so poor,
Rich but in love, I live in constant dread
Of thy just scorn, deserving little better,
Drifting along supine thus to endure
Proud Fortune's quibs in airy realms, instead
Of breaking for thy sake her galling fetter.

XVIII

How canst thou doubt my sworn fidelity?
Are not my words avouched by ev'ry deed?
Are not my faculties as one agreed
In voting all their fruitfulness to thee?
If there be one that's not thy devotee,
Or once thy captive pining to be freed,

I'll have it tried and give a traitor's meed
For guarding faithlessly thy memory.
Believe me, then, and fear no change, my own.
Thou couldst not find the shoals of my affection,
It is so like the deep and boundless main,
Pacific, ruled by thy slight will alone,
With ev'ry wave a slave to thy direction,
Where thou canst steer life's boat and solely reign.

XIX

When I of you do write, your splendid worth,
Increasing e'er in eyes of contemplation,
Like avalanche from its great elevation
Comes crushing my weak powers to the earth;
For how can I, of gifts owning such dearth,
Pen aught aspiring to your commendation?
What better hope from your consideration
Than biting scorn or else good-natured mirth?
My stubborn perseverance waxes faint
With such considering, and then for days
I swear myself to silence most obscure;
Until my words will out and make complaint,
Berating me and sounding forth your praise,
Despite restraint in sonnets immature.

XX ·

Most lovely vision of my happy hours,
Had I the artist's skill and hands to trace
Thy lineaments with all their pleasing grace,
To paint thy face, its like of lights and flowers,—
What artist's work eternal that now towers
In high esteem but by it would apace
Lose its prestige, grow dull and commonplace,
So irresistible thy beauty's powers?
And yet before the world 'twould do thee wrong,

Being in soul as perfect as in form,
To paint thy spirit's beautiful repair
And call it thee,—these 'dornments rich belong
To it as settings to grace and lend it charm.
The whole is thee, incomparable, most fair.

XXI

Oh, come thou wanton sprite, thy art unfold
With flowers whose potent milk dropped in the eyes
Doth make fair maidens love what they despise,
For I have sworn revenge. When late made bold
By coy equivocating ways, I told
My love, marked off and stopped with bursting sighs,
She did but smile demure and tantalize,
Her heart unmoved quite passionless and cold.
Most wicked Fair to laugh at my sad plight.
But I will make her rue her merriment.
With Love allied I'll storm her obdurate breast,
And fill with traitors through the quiet night,
I'll torment her with sharp delight, till spent,
She comes to sue for peace at my behest.

XXII

I am amazed that I should hardily dare
In halting verse do violence to thee,
By whom the stars lose half their brilliancy,
And most aspiring flowers grow less fair.
But chided fondness coupled with despair
Must offer plea for my temerity;
As theirs the fault so theirs the sorrow be,
And thou hast caused them both, so thine the care.
Upbraid me not, nor silence with thy frown,
My muse. The passion that enslaves my will,
If thou canst not reciprocate, then give
Thy pity, other kindly works to crown:

Or if thou wilt, then bid my heart be still,
For if I may not sing I cannot live.

XXIII

Morn's gorgeous hues, the sober tints of eve,
The day adorned with nature's gay attire,
The dreamy eyes of night that rouse desire,
The cobweb cities that the moonbeams weave;—
All these I own, and life, by Heaven's leave,—
Life in a land of blooms and golden fire,
Where ev'ry bird like some enchanted lyre
Blends harmonies that man cannot conceive.
But still to me, with you away, it seems
A worthless waste, and I am like to one
That weary watches for the favored guest,
And as the longed for hours pass he deems
The gay hall lonely, pleasure finds he none,—
One missing form outvalues all the rest.

XXIV

This land is cold and miserly, its snows
Are on the heart of things; there's too much thought,
And impulse in the ice of reason caught
Is chilled. Life sleeps and wakes and moves in
prose.
But oh, there is a land where always glows
The gen'rous warmth from noble feelings wrought,
Where winter's cooling breaths have only taught
Us how to value summer's blushing rose.
Then come, my love, and I, thy votary,
Will twine the rarest wreath of that fair South
For thee, and to its breezes I will sing
Thy praises, till they sound from sea to sea,
And thy concordant name to ev'ry mouth
At thought of what is prettiest shall spring.

XXV

Another day of conning from the book
Wherein my heart keeps tally of its score,
The record of thy deeds and all the lore
That touches thee, thy ev'ry word and look;
Now wrangling with the boorish days that rook
My eyes from sight of what I most adore,
Now blessing gracious time that will restore
Thy enervating presence to this nook.
So much am I enmeshed in thy enchantment,
That all the season's wealth of roseate hues
Attendant in thy train are seen by me
But when thy eyes to mine bestow advancement;
And with thy absence tints resplendant fuse,
The dullness stays, the splendor follows thee.

XXVI

Of-times I've harshly called myself to task,
With reason's logic striving to convince
Some counsel in me, wary for defense,
Its fond hallucinations to unmask;
And thus I plead; that any snail may bask
In light, the sun will never drive it thence,
So insignificant its insolence;
But more than that small right it cannot ask,
But bravely answers the defense, "Admit
What you have said, yet does the snail not get
The sun's good warmth as much as you or I?
And so may I, though wanting grace and wit
To win the favor of my lady, yet
Enjoy her light which she does not deny."

XXVII

Th' enchantress Circe has spilled her vat of wine,
And made the gray-rimmed world a world of love;

The dead stalks push to brighter life above;
Love moves the bird to build in pregnant vine.
O heart, wild heart, what mate song answers thine?
Art thou the only lonely in the grove?
Pluck up thy heart, thou winter mourning dove,
And woo again and win thy Valentine.
Go to her, sonnet, with thy lapping wave,
And whisper in the shells that are her ears
The secret of my soul's deep restless sea.
She is its sky and land-mark, cliff and cave,
She is the hope to which its heaving veers,
Its life, its death, its light, its mystery.

XXVIII

My heart is like unto a hive of bees.
And ev'ry drop of blood springs forth in thought
That rocket swift through ether, bending seas,
By Love compassionate and prec'dents taught,
Encompass thee in soft, revolving chain;
Returning honey laden: one of dew
From thy sweet, waking flower eyes has lain
A nectar'd store, another from the rue
Of hope half doubting brings the bitter-sweet,
And others that have dared to venture near
The rose-fold of thy lips, more indiscreet,
Have fallen victims in the honeyed mere.
Thus ever busy do they lay away
Rich stores for us against a winter's day.

XXIX

I've run my course, the wreath is not for me.
I've run and lost, the fire of contest dies,
Th' horizon closes in upon tired eyes,
Before me beckons bleak despondency.
The ready cheers, the smiles of sympathy,
Triumphant music that assails the skies,—

All these the winner's with the willing prize;
They crown the trophy car of victory.
But must we fall submissive to defeat?
I hold him nobler, scorning throws of chance,
That beaten rises, strives for greater things,
With all life's force fixed firm and sure as Fate,
Steel strong in faith of his great soul's advance,
With that sustaining self that makes men kings.

XXX

Thou art the rugged rock, impressionless,
O'er which the waves of my affection break,
Back tossed into the deep with snowy flake,
Each sighing as it falls in vain distress.
And yet despite thy frowning heartlessness
The heat of thy displeasure cannot slake
Their flow, nor from their circling wooings take
Thyself, being the coast that they caress.
For move the beach inland and still the sea
Will follow; crush the beetling stones and o'er
Their tops the surf will sweep resistlessly,
Forever onward! till they find the shore,
The which it laps with soft insistency,
Conjoining both in one forever-more.

XXXI

If but my fearful tongue could smoothly say
What struggles in my heart to speak to her,
I know the sorrow of its tone would stir
Her gentle thoughts propitious like the May;
But coward Love, when oft I would assay
In speech my burning passion to refer,
Plucks back the impulse wild with weak demur,
Reading in saucy eyes a ready nay.
Oh, love, my beautiful, be kind, be kind.
Our days are few of joy, and canst thou stake

Their rhythmic flow? Oh, love, lest thou forget —
Sweet mem'ries are like dew unto the mind
And soothe its pain, but stormy break
Remorseful waves lashed on by black regret.

XXXII

Sails of my eager bark are poised for flight.
Fate steers and busy Time frowns on my stay.
My eyes are strained far o'er the restless spray
To where their one desire recedes from sight.
And who can say if e'er again 'neath skies so bright
Our full-winged barks shall cross each other's way,
Or rest again in some secluded bay,
In murmuring waves and mutual delight?
Good-bye, your heart is young and will forget,
For other lips shall woo it back from me.
The life-long watch and loneliness are mine.
And so I'd have it be, 'twould only fret
My mind if, lurking in your memory,
One thought of me should cause you to repine.

XXXIII

Dearest, there's but one tone to this lute of mine.
I took it up and thought to find the height
Of all man strives for, thund'ring with the might
Of Jovean wrath or drawing out the fine,
Sad sweetness of a soul in song divine.
Ah, here all silent gazing out of sight
Sit I in tears, nor aught can play, poor wight,
Unless I see thy image in their brine.
Say, shall I lean upon a willow tree
And do the elements outrage with my woe?
Or shall I carol lightly, sorrow free,
With thinking on the happiness I owe?
'Tis thine, dear heart, to furnish forth the key,
Or sad or glad, for love is all I know.

XXXIV

Blushing she came to me and plucked my sleeve;
Spring-favored, glorying in its richest morn,
Summer-ripe cheeks, her hair like tass'ling corn
And winter's frost upon her breast's broad heave.
Ah, fain was I right happily to leave
Care frowning on the meager way forlorn,
To wear sweet ringlets on my brow, close shorn,
With Love and laugh away Time's short reprieve.
Alas, it cannot be, for though I turn
While worn trudging and backward turn again,
With passion lips e'er breathing Love's sweet name,
The quenchless fires that in my wild breast burn
And some dread spell by some dread power lain
About me, urge me forward, crying fame.

XXXV

Thou art akin to Nature's favored pet,
The violet; for when the months choice made
Of all her wealth by Flora's hands arrayed,
The wreath of March received the violet.
And still unsatisfied, the gay croquette
Claimed thee, and to the envious eyes displayed
Thee as her treasure, best beloved, and laid
Upon thy brow her own blue coronet.
And through these handmaids modest first I knew
My love, and dared to think of thee. Always
The same endearing messages they tell,
Always of thee and plead, "Oh, sir, be true
To her, our sister; love her all thy days,
For none we know deserves it half so well."

XXXVI

Fool, thou! to burden thus most wickedly
With freight of grief Time's transports; on thy face

The map of sorrow, all because no place
Within one woman's heart's secure to thee.
Go find her yonder in the dance and see
Her moving in another's close embrace,
In ecstasy thy death could not embase,
And let thy pride to love a teacher be.
Thus wisely warns the passionless voice of reason,
But hated for its very wisdom. Oh,
If this be folly, love, like April's day
From Reason's court I'll banished be for treason,
And with sweet Folly through the hard world go,
Laughing and suffering, we two for aye.

XXXVII

Whatever galling thorn of discontent
May irritate, whatever frowning mien
Of Fortune substitute for laughter lean
Sorrow with moan for loss and all for-spent,
Your coming always sunny, redolent,
Dispels; and at your feet full fed with keen
Enjoyment, all the Furies' harbored spleen
Were powerless to mar my languishment.
You are the magnet of my happiness,
Directing cause of ev'ry pleasing act;
Your smile the worth of all the good I plan,
And so without you life were barrenness:
For when you from these many goods substract
The cause, yourself, I am but half a man.

XXXVIII

There is great comfort and an exaltation
In contemplating duty finished well,
And in the plaudits that impulsive swell,
The friendly hand's sincere congratulation.
'Tis good to live when healthful animation
Stirs joyously in ev'ry youthful cell,

When promise leads and failure cannot quell
Nor backward force the will's determination.
But life is happiest when some word or glance
Of yours admiring says: "Done well and true."
And your soul's hand reached forth clasps close in
mine.

Ah, then, e'en to the skies my thoughts advance,
Then nagging worry bids my course adieu
And rainbow loops o'er scattered cloudlets' tine.

XXXIX

White rose or red, the pensive pallor bred
Of pure and spiritual fire, the more
Of earth, but of its best, whose flight may soar
With angels, love to noble spirits wed;
I've seen within my cheeks both banners spread,—
The red that cupids kneeling down adore,
The virtue white that bridges heaven o'er
For man's rapt thoughts to cross with eager tread.
Choice have I made a thousand times in vain,
For e'en while swearing pref'rence for the one.
Thy change had split my vows in twain;
Doubly forsworn to both, I'm true to none,
And yet I am not fickle in the main,—
To both in thee as faithful as the sun.

XL

How poorly does my awkward mien compare
With that gay throng, whose grace reflecting thine,
Adorns and beautifies thy dazzling shrine;
They are the flowers, I the useless tare.
But ah, the meanest thing must have some share
Of light and rain, and seeing thee is mine;
Forbid me not thy presence which I pine,
I love it, though it teaches me despair.
More gifted ones caressingly may bribe

The heralds to thy heart with figured speech,
So flattering thy ready sympathy,
Yet none of these who with tense vows subscribe
Their love can with their measure tripled reach
The high regard I'll always hold for thee.

XLI

A little cloud that gave our eyes delight,
Its beauty so adorned the sunlit sky,
We never thought 'twould ever terrify
And tear the giant pine from its proud height;
We never knew that all the vaunted might
Of men would tremble as it thundered by.
We never knew —— Alas, alas, for aye!
All's wrong, all's wrong, and naught can set it
right.

A little cloud not up in heaven's blue,
But on th' horizon of our lives its sweep,
One gentle word it backward would have born,
But passion fanned it on. We never knew,
We never cared, each hid his eyes to weep,
Nor saw how deep the other's heart was torn.

XLII

'T is spring, she hears the mocking-bird's sweet trill;
Through downy leaves with rich-toned melody
Her answer pulses from the earth, and see,
A thousand tissued wings the glad world fill;
While sweets are born from ravished daffodil,
And shadows quick, like sprites in revelry
Surprised, glide through the budding wood and flee
And fade from sight with sigh from hill to hill.
Oh, Nature, loveliest 'neath thy sweeping crown
Of dogwood wreathed with fern and apple bloom,
When festive banners furled, again unroll
And chase from hill and dale harsh winter's frown,

There is no loneliness with thee, no gloom,
For thou communest with our inmost soul.

XLIII

I'd rather live one sunny day with thee,
With hand upon the hair that is my pride,
Out-facing heaven's glory with my bride,
Knowing great love for thee and thine for me,
Than weary out a long eternity
Of painful breath by shrewish Fate denied
This darling wish to which my heart affied,
Apart would fret and never blessed be.
Ages must pass and with their passage bear
Their gifts; the dead are dead and live will go.
None sees what step is stepping in the grave,
And who would crawl the earth and shackles wear
For this, when he one perfect day might know
And find oblivion in a glorious wave.

XLIV

(With a Box of Candy.)

Good-bye, O wayward one, you'll find the sweet
Of parting here inclosed, the bitter part
I've locked away securely in my heart.
With it I'll think of thee in lone retreat,
And breathe thy name until the birds repeat.
I'll tell the violets how cruel thou art,
Till pity's tears to their kind eyes shall start,
Such heartlessness in one so young to weet.
For all of that I envy not thy joy.
While youth is in its May-morn pluck its flowers;
Laugh at old Time, make merry with his bent,
That when he comes thy beauty to destroy,
Thou still canst boast of many pleasant hours
Whose dreams are dear, although the real be spent.

XLV

I'm sad, dear heart, for what is written here
In words is love's veriest ecstasy,
That makes the before one with the all to be
Through love attuned to God's own list'ning ear.
The metal of my heart is just as sheer,
And from the humbleness of bended knee
My soul looks full as high to honor thee
With heart's most worshipful love. But, oh, my
 dear,
I read these lines and scarce withhold to weep,
Seeing how I have failed in my sweet task.
This lapwing minstrel, spending all her breath,
Has rippled of a love that seems to sleep
In me; yet drop the proof of words and ask
What-e'er thou wilt, I'll serve thee well till death.

XLVI

I love you; that is all and yet so much
Remains of feeling in me out of reach
That clamors to be rosaried in speech,
Of tendrils weakly reaching forth to clutch
At thy dear self, that life is but a search
For ways and words, as each day follows each,
Of new expression that my love may teach
Thee all its moods and keep thy soul in touch.
For saying just "I love thee," seems so weak;
It does not tell thee how each day and night
Is crowded full with thoughts and dreams of thee;
Nor of my loneliness the while I peek
In through the blinds of yesterday for sight
Of thee and hold so close the memory.

THE KISS

I

WHAT Summer winds are to the sphere,
What music to the raptured ear,
What rain and sun and shade and showers
To drooping plumes and bending flowers,
And all the seasons of the year,

And what of need all these appear
To joy sweet life, they come not near,
I swear, in bliss bestowing powers,
Thy first fond kiss.

Through Winter's rage or Summer drear
There can no grief be mine, my dear,
Though blight should wither all the bowers,
While thy sweet lips can coin the hours,
And make a rainbow in a tear
With thy fond kiss.

II

Oh, kiss me, love, not once nor twice,
Nor any number — man's device
To fix the time or worth of things,
For so each numbered bliss takes wings
And flies away to paradise.

But life in one continuous kiss
Shall grow eternally in bliss,
Forgetful of bee fortune's stings
And all things else,

But that our souls shall float and rise
And lord it o'er the starry skies,

Where some old god all doleful sings
Of scattered fanes and worshipings,
A kiss our state and worth the price
Of all things else.

III

Here love, my trembling lips for thine
Are pleading mutely, the round line
Soul land's horizon all aflame
With sun love's all sufficient beam.
Come let thy youthful branches twine

And bear and ripe in this love shine;
And all soul land shall be thy shrine,
And I, its priest, shall preach thy fame
Full endlessly.

Ah, life would surfeit, sweetheart mine,
In kiss sips quaffed from hearts of wine,
If thou wouldst help to fill my dream,
And blessings now that only seem
Would really be and prove divine
Full endlessly.

IV

Shell curved, cold lips, lonely beset,
Two waves long sweeping forward met:
The kiss that joined the oceans wide,
And all the sea on either side
Through ages' flight have felt it yet.

So, love, not more could I forget
Thy kiss and all the compound debt
Of love, the star of my soul's tide
That flows to thee.

So back and forward, soon and late,
My spirit holds a while to whet
Its sweet desire, till longings chide
Affection's flood and forward glide
The eager waves, and brook no let,
That flow to thee.

v

The farmer piles the rugged wain
Until its great wheels groan with pain,
And in the wood the leaves that die,
Fall down tremulous with a sigh,
And bird eyes backward look in vain,

While in the meadows they complain
Of barren boughs and garnered grain.
But see, not sorrowed, love, am I,
Thy kiss repays.

Let blasts deflower Summer's fane,
Let man rob all the world for gain,
The cold death hands that heavy lie
On stalk and blossom I defy.
Forgotten all in this refrain,
Thy kiss repays.

vi

Oh, heart, what house of wealth art thou,
That gifts so precious canst bestow
With these two spendthrift lips of thine,
That bless as deep as bless divine,
And princely all thy claims forego?

If I should pay thee all I trow
In love bonds, what a sum 'twould grow,

And Cupid's clearing should assign
Thee ev'ry thing.

By my account, dear heart, 's so low
That I a paupered wretch must go,
Crushed down with debt, shouldst thou design
To claim for thy gifts like of mine,
For I have naught worth while and owe
Thee ev'ry thing.

VII

Not seeing aught, I passed roughshod,
Destructive, where the lilies nod,
Until I saw thee standing there,
And thou didst make all things so fair,
At once I knew and understood.

All in another faith and mood,
Whate'er of nobleness or good
Had slept in me, thou didst repair
E'en as thy own.

So when the frost falls on my blood,
And my old body's barren sod,
Then with thy lips sweet doors of prayer,
Kiss once my soul to prove thy care,
And tearful pass it up to God,
E'en as thy own.

THE MOCKING-BIRD

"Whate'er birds did or dreamed, this bird could say."
— SIDNEY LANIER.

I CANNOT say when first I heard his song,
It is so much of all my life a part.
There is no mem'ry when his cunning art

Did not my soul with inspirations throng.
And waking with the spring, desires grow strong,
Recalling joys, that past, now soothe, now smart,
And to each piping note my fancies start,
Attentive for his voice the whole day long.
I yearn to hear again, O mocking-bird,
Thy ringing flow of matchless melody,
Weaving 'round me with its magic thread
Old days and striking cords that have not stirred
For years, in vaults 'neath sorrow's lock and key
Where darkly dwell rich mem'ries of the dead.

THIS IS THE MOCKING-BIRD

WHAT art thou, pray?
Sure not of clay,
Though earth may love and hallow.
More like the wing
And voice of Spring
O'er budding wood and fallow.
Art thou a bird,
Or spirit heard
To dream of ever after?
Filling all time
With songs sublime
And silver notes of laughter.

I woke from a dream
Of frozen field and stream,
Of sunless days with frosty gleam.

There came a trill
From bed of daffodil
That shook the air with happy thrill.

With sun allied
Of Summer circled wide,
And rushed the warm blood's sluggish tide.

It dropped like rain,
As soft, and 'rose again,
And flooded forest, hill, and plain.

It wooed the flowers
With tales of happy hours
In leafy nooks of summer bowers.

It spoke to man,
In spring's oncoming van,
Of earth's gay tints and sky's japan.

A mocking-bird,—
He sang and nature heard,
And danced to hear the mystic word.

Sing, poet, sing!
From dewy home uprising.
Sing, poet, sing!
The proud of earth despising.
A thousand ears shall listen,
A thousand eyes shall glisten,
A thousand hearts shall christen
The poet past thy kind.

Sing, poet, sing!
The moon beams in the valley,
Sing, poet sing!
The morning's glories dally.
Awake thee from thy sleeping
The stars are bright and peeping,
The rose is sad and weeping,
To hear thy matin song.

Sing, poet, sing!
Of hopeful days undying.
Sing, poet, sing!
And ease a mortal's sighing.
The world from thee would borrow,
For none can twine their sorrow
With flowers of the morrow,
Like thee, O poet bird!

Voice of love in the Springtime
I've waited thy coming long,
Sad-eyed through the Winter I've waited
And harked for thy dropping song.

And passion and breath and power,
Were merged in a wish to hear
Another, further chapter
From this age-wise woodland seer.

Voice of love in the Spring-time,
And voice of love in the Fall,
Was thy harmony one of sorrow?
No, its notes were of happiness all.

Such a vessel with merriment brimming
And torrent-like jumping its bounds,
Filling the world with a flood-tide
Of matchless musical sounds.

Pretty bird,—or what thou art,—
What angel taught thy tuneful art,
So blithely gay and cumberless,
So joyed with happy eagerness,
To sing the tyrant care from reigning,
Sing away cross moods complaining.

Pretty bird, if such thou be,
Come, pray thee, from the myrtle tree,
And tune thy throat at my commanding,
Give my ears thy understanding,
Sing thy secret song to me.

Thus I had it from the fairies
Heaven's high majestic hall,
As for some great festival
 Flashed and glittered
 Gayly littered
All with angels,
Bearing each a harpsichord,
Singing sweet "hosannas" to the Lord.
 Cherubim and seraphim
 Swung with glowing hand
 Eager incense fanned
By a choir of pinions, virtue white,
Circling in a maze before the throne of light

Giant light'ning forked and flashed,
Through the eaves of night it crashed
Scorching ruins of sableness;
Deep the organ's roar intoned
O'er the night enthroned,
Rocking, ringing through the skies,
Shook the pillars of paradise.
Rumbling deep and distant
Ringing full and clear,
Filling each attuned ear,
Thrilling ev'ry soul with vibrant bliss,
Ev'ry knee was bent,
Ev'ry head was bowed,
Ev'ry heart intent,
Throbbled with precious sense endowed,
'Rose upon the music's wave,
As their being in it did lave.

Soft then deep it grew again,
Dying, sobbing, in its pain,
Low and low through conscious air,
Soft as tones of whispered prayer,
Suddenly it ceased.

Down the lovely organist,
Saint Cecilia, stepped with modest eye,
Leaned against the golden bars,
And a radiance shot the sky,
Tinged the earth and lit the stars.
Like a moth that spies the ray,
Tempted from its darker way,
Lost and trembling in its fear,
Beats its breast against the pane;
So a bird had winged its flight
Through the night.
Saint Cecilia, looked and spied,
At her side,
Blind, the wanderer.
Tender-hearted Saint Cecilia,
Saint Cecilia, God-made fair,
Splendor-lit and great and pure,
Matchless in that kingdom there,
Like a child she wept glad tears,
Like a child she chid its trembling fears.
"Little sinning eremite,
Scarce your eyes can brook the light."
Smiling, thus: "Earth's a sad place,
Is it not, I crave your grace?
Poor, poor man, gave he his cares
Wings like thine of willing prayers,
Earth might be a little heaven,
And the hearts that burst unshriven
In the flames of hell's despair
Might have tasted life untired,
In the presence of the All Desired.

Speed you back to man for me,
Thus I tune your trembling throat anew,
Sing you now in field and grove,
Sing when weary
Sing at rest,
Sing from hearts their eerie guest;
Lift some tempted one above his folly,
Drawing him to heaven with thy music's chain,
Then my little bird will you not have sung in vain."

Hushed was ev'ry thing.
Silence swung the gates of utt'rance closed,
And a voice, source of music's spring,
Filled the list'ning skies.
Earth its echo heard on summer's breeze,
In the hilly roar of distant seas,
In the exquisite pain of something needed,
Speaking from the heart in ready tears,
Dreamed of through the years,
Longed for, yet unknown,
Hosts of Heaven wondered,
Marveled and in dove-like peace adored.
Stilled the Voice, and like the autumn blown
Sedge, a stir from wing to wing explored,
Silken voiced, and Saint Cecilia,
Home her little captive sent,
Guiding through the night
With a shaft of light.
Turning then she went,
Pensive climbed the proud ascent,
Found the keys and roused their slumb'ring might.

No more, I hear his voice in the meadow,
His feathers by south winds blown.
The arbutus is blooming for him,
And the jasmine has built him a throne.

The fairies have heard their musician
And dance through the glad, long day.
The ghosts of the somber seasons
With the snow-clouds stalk away.

Come merry, come merry, come merry,
For the greenwood is ringing with glee
Come feast on the blossom and berry,
And rest 'neath the dogwood tree.

Oh, hurry, oh, hurry, oh, hurry!
The sky's propitious above.
A truce to your fighting with worry,
For the bird is singing of love.

Come marry, come marry, come marry,
We will build in the grapevine a nest,
Where the wand'ring minstrel may tarry,
And teach us that care is a jest.

There will be no to-morrow
In the thought of to-day,
No toning of sorrow
In our roundelay.

For the bird will be singing
At midnight and morn,
And Triton shall 'wake us
With a blast of his horn.

There will be no to-morrow,
And each rollicking blast
Of the breezes shall borrow
For us joys of the past.

Oh, the woods shall not tarnish
Nor the hills grow bleak,
Nor time eat the varnish
From thy apple-bloom cheek.

But hark, the bird is singing!
What does he say?
To-day is but a promise
Of a better day.

A land of laughter hears him,
Merry fields and skies,
And hearts that carry sunbeams'
Shafts in fearless eyes.

Oh, sunny soulful Dixie,
Hold him to thy breast,
He is thy own bird, Dixie,
And thy heart his nest.

Thou gray-coated wee warrior,
Knight so bold and free,
I pay my love and homage
Fealty's debt to thee.

ON FINDING THREE GRAVES IN THE WOODS

THREE graves beneath this cherry tree,
This quiet little spot,
Around it writhe the tangled vines,
The sunshine strikes it not.

Still westward slips the setting sun,
The moon and all the stars,
In cycles lapping endless years,
And leaving ruthless scars.

New trees are on the same old hill,
New paths are in the wood,
A crumbling quarter chinked with light
Broods where the farmhouse stood.

The morn comes riding gorgeously
Into a slumb'ring world,
The dew gleams glist'ning in her locks,
And lips with glad smiles curled.

But these poor dwellers wake no more
To join in daily strife.
A skull and bones and narrow cell
Their only signs of life.

My fancy frames a day long past.
I see the creeping hearse,
The drooping plumes, the mourning crowds
That gather and disperse.

Another grave is made, and laid
Within its gloomy keep
One loved one more, and at the bar
Fond mourners stay to weep.

And catch a glimpse of half-seen sails,
That float beyond their ken,
And ships by angel captains steered
And manned by souls of men.

Ah, death has snapped all ties in twain.
Here slumber side by side
Old loves and now eternal bonds
May soul from soul divide.

A gulf nor love nor hate can cross,
'Twixt realms of woe and bliss,
'Twixt death and night and life and light,
In other worlds than this.

They built their homes so very near,
A span of earth apart,

That death might all unite once more,
That heart might beat to heart.

A whim of fancy, looking back,
Would give dead forms new shape,
And tenant homes long tenantless,
That doorless gloom and gape.

Around the eaves the sparrows flit,
And in the apple trees;
And all the breeze-blown perfumed blooms
Are brown with honey-bees.

And scarcely knee-high treads the sun
Among the ox-eyed daisies
Where in the western pasture-land
The herd contented grazes.

The faint, far echo of a horn,
The day's hard work is done,
And home sits 'twixt the farmer's eyes
And slowly setting sun.

He hears the busy shuttle hum,—
And at the big farm gate
A curly-headed baby pouts
Because her "dad" is late.

A mother's love, a father's pride,
A rare Utopian bloom
That lives to cheer their parent hearts
And chide away their gloom.

Her tiny arms about their necks,
Her little cheek to theirs,
Her kisses sweet like angels' breaths
Can banish half their cares.

Her strange conceits they have by heart,
Their friends to proudly tell.
Their joy to hear her chiming laugh,
So like an altar bell.

And while she pouts two long arms swoop
And bear her up so high,
And kisses smother her until
She scarce has breath to cry.

The loom is idle now, the wife
In haste has laid aside
Her work and runs to join the two,
Bright-eyed with love and pride,

To share her husband's fond caress,
And hold his rough, hard hand.
And each in other's beaming eyes
Gaze while their hearts expand.

Inside the low-browed home they pass,
And peace and cheer abide
About their board, and in their hearts
Love floats a ceaseless tide.

The scene is changed, the child is dead,
Her hands across her breast,
Her cold, soft cheek by sunny curls
Of six short years caressed.

The house is saddened, lone, and dark,
A dreary longing creeps
About the father while he works
And mother while she weeps.

The empty plate, the empty bed,
The still voice in their ears,

The name that gladdened all their souls,
Now fills their eyes with tears.

The dead will not be put away.
All day all night the cry
Of that small voice is clamoring,
Because it would not die.

And time may make the gape seem less,
May smooth the edge of pain,
But mem'ry cannot pass that way
And be at peace again.

Come, tell me, child, if that the dead
Can grant the living's prayer,
That I shall meet some distant day
A little sister there.

Beneath a dark magnolia tree,
In sea of green-capped waves,
With cross and slab and silent choirs
She sleeps in a home of graves.

Has earth no claims upon her love?
She was a babe like you,
And though she be an angel now,
She is my sister too.

Time's dust lies heavy o'er that past,
But even now I hear
Unchanged her voice and see her face
And feel her footsteps near.

What happy cares are hers each day?
Where sound her harp and voice,
Around the gorgeous throne of light
When heaven's hosts rejoice?

No sound, stern silence me rebukes.
No sound to mar your rest
Except the tulip's throbbing,
And its echo in my breast.

Be still, wild heart, why flutter so?
Dost think that death will speak?
Fear not nor hope, all men have failed
In the quest that you now seek.

No prayers, no tears, no human will
Can break on their repose —
In life perhaps they frolicked here,
Beneath this tree, who knows?

And life to death and death to life,
One to the other gives,
The germ of death still feeds on life,
And life in death still lives.

Sleep on within your cloister dark,
Your narrow bed of clay,
And here forgotten you shall lie
Till dawn of judgment day.

And each awaits your awful fate,—
A flame with ev'ry breath,
A soul by ev'ry wind fanned out
The end that man calls death.

Some slumber wrapped in majesty,
And hushed the passer's tread
As stooping to the carved slab,
He recollects the dead.

And some lie hid as you do here,
Unmarked by cross or stone,

No one to watch or deck their graves
But Nature's hand alone.

But I'd prefer a spot like yours
To take my last long sleep,
Where birds alone sing requiems,
And dewdrops softly weep.

Where gnarlèd oaks entwine their boughs
To shade the resting head,
And sent'nel pines sob out their grief
And farewells to the dead.

But hark the weird owl keeps his watch
O'er ghostly shades of night,
And whippoorwills her trumpeters
Begin their noisy flight.

The cold moon chills your resting place,
It creeps o'er hill and dell,
Upon the world it casts its spell.
Unknown, unknelled, farewell.

WE TWO

WE two have walked apart so long,
And shall we walk together
Through hot and cold and weal and woe,
And never mind the weather?

And will you steadfast stand, my lass,
My right arm's strength in trouble?
Or will your Summer love be rent,
And vanish like a bubble?

A fearsome road it is, my lass;
And few there are that make it
The rosy path to heaven's gate
They dream of when they take it.

For, lass, their love is cake and lace,
With ne'er a thought of duty.
No faith have they that sacrifice
Is half of true love's beauty.

A while they learn the bitter taste
And bicker at their blunder;
And they who walked together, lass,
From thenceforth walk asunder.

But surely you are true, my lass,
And surely we shall weather
The roughest storms of life, and go
The whole sweet way together.

MAMMON

I SAW a vision, where the hard old cobblestones
Gutted the wheels that thundered by incessantly;
The houses reeked with filth and ev'ry vile disease.
O'erhead the smoke of factories shut out the sky.

And in the dismal street the children of the poor
Plucked up the filth and wiped it on their tumbled
hair.

Gaunt women, slaves to want, watched without
frown or smile,
With calloused brains and souls that never thought
of prayer.

And all day long the children's cries went up for
bread,
And half-starved mothers, hearing, cursed maternity.
Their men, broad-shouldered, bore the burdens of the
world,
Fought famine off with crime, and staked their lives
for fee.

Beyond the squalor of the street I saw the rich,
In silks and laces, hands begemmed, sit down to feast;
And laugh and jest as though no care were in the
world,—
Saw President, philanthropist, church power, and
priest.

Saw wealth enough to gild each filthy cobblestone
Squandered to stuff the maw of some sleek, soulless
hide;
And heard a query echo back to earth's first dawn,
"Am I my brother's keeper?" "Thou art," the
voice replied.

MY DREAM OF FAME

Not all can move the gaping world to wonder
Or write their names for future times to read;
Not all can strike with fame's eternal thunder
The unborn heavens,—such was not decreed.

The mystery of genius' subtler meaning
Is some too deep for all of us to grasp.
We may not pluck aside the altar screening;
Fame's mirage mocks our ever hopeful clasp.

And yet who knows where lies the debt and credit?
The world may scorn the richest gift of gold.

The Master yet has ev'ry book to edit;
What man has scorned, by Him may be enrolled.

Let one heart know that I have done my duty,
Let one heart know how high has been my aim,
And see in what I've toiled for all the beauty —
That is my star, and that my dream of fame.

YOU HYPOCRITES

AH, man, with your one day prating of God,
And down on your marrow-bones
To a shimmering sod or a bag of stones!

You hypocrites with hearts of brass,
Your prayers like a stink arise —
Think you to pass under His eyes?

The Christ has been kissed by Judas before.
Shall he likely forget so much —
Throw wide the door for another such!

For thirty pieces the Christ was sold.
Think you he has known no wince
For the times that gold has bought Him since?

O men, so near like God in all!
With heaven and Christ to know,
How can you fall and grovel so?

WHO CARES?

WHEN the friends that I love are my friends no
more,
And friends I have nowhere,

But memories bitter and heart so sore —
Who cares? Ah, mother, you care.

When I stand by the temple, crushed to the earth
For the ideals dead in there,
And the people pass by with their scoffing mirth —
Who cares? Ah, mother, you care.

When they laugh at my pitiful failures too,
At my being the fool to dare
What Heaven denied me the talent to do —
Who cares? Ah, mother, you care.

And as long as hearts for affection shall yearn,
And hearts shall answer their prayer,
So long shall your love to my least need turn,
And as God cares, you shall care.

THE TROUBLE OF JENNY

A PIPE you can get for a penny,
An' a penny's the price of a smoke,
But ah, the whims of Jenny,
An' the times she's kept me broke.

Sometimes she's worth the money,
An' again I'm darned if I know.
But a pipe is a man's best crony
When his spirit is down an' low.

Now Jenny'll grow fat an' wrinkled,
Or lean an' stiff as a rod;
Like a bean that's soaked get crinkled,
An' would look best under the sod.

I'm not sayin' aught 'gainst Jenny,
She's a peach with a July fit —
But if Jenny was bony an' skinny,
She wouldn't delight me a bit.

But a Chineese smoked this filly
A century in Hongkong,
Where I found him settin' silly
An' he sold her for a song.

An' there ain't a wrinkle in her,
Though she's yellow in her hide,
She's better after dinner
Than Jenny for a bride.

Jenny's got eyes for others,
Which has set me to figger in mind,
To what lengths she has been with my
brothers,
An' how far I'm taggin' behind.

So, Jenny, not able to read you,
I'm shy of bearin' the yoke,
Go on with your wares, I don't need you,
I'd swap you off for a smoke.

FOR ETERNITY

I LOVED, she loved, we loved for aye,
Just the two of us forever, ever and a day.
The pendulum of Time "tick-tocked"
From midnight back to noon.
And half the time it was the sun,
And half the time the moon.

And ev'ry star a minute told
And ev'ry space an hour,

And we two watched them break and fall
Like petals of a flower;
My lips, her lips, our lips for aye,
Pressed so close together forever and a day.

We looked not back nor yet before,
For all eternity
Was in the love I bore for her
And that she bore for me;
We lived and live, will live for aye,
In our love for one another forever and a day.

TWO LITTLE MAIDS

LAST year four stockings hung at the hearth
Where now there hang but two;
For two in the attic are folded away,
Each in its little shoe.

Up in the attic cold and alone,
There's a doll with a broken leg,
That stares in the dark at a little blue dress
Hung on a wooden peg.

One little red dress doffed for the night
To be donned on Christmas day;
Two little knees at the bedside bent,
Two chubby hands folded to pray.

One little girl lisping her prayers,
Looking up with eyes of brown,
One little girl that heavenward went
With blue eyes looking down.

HOPE ABANDONED

O, MY poor heart!
Ye woods and fields and sunny days,
Your glamour goes, your sorrow stays,—
And O, my heart! my heart is broken, sunny days.

The dark night falls,
O, sunny days! It falls on sea
And land and sky eternally,
And hope that never more on earth shall come to
me.

Ah, well for those
Who sleep full deep and know no pain,
And those who wake to laugh again,
But ah, dear sunny days, pity me whose hopes are
vain.

PRO AND CON

TELL me, Cupid, come now, pray you,—
Is there meaning in a dream?
Do impressions caught in dreaming
Happen really as they seem?

I've a kiss that seems to linger
On my lips as it was pressed,
And the world is ten times brighter,
North and east and south and west.

Shall I bid her to remember
Where her lips were yester-night?
Would she blush and prove her spirit
Conscious of that same delight?

Oh, her lips are like the meeting
Of the sunbeam and the rose;
Cunning dimpled lines of danger,
How I stand it, Heaven knows.

Laughing, begging "Come and kiss me,"
But the eyes warn, "Don't you dare."
"Taste from me," they're shyly saying,
"But you must not venture there."

What would happen should I kiss them?
Would I wither in her eye,
Like the light'ning-splintered forest
Struck by anger from the sky?

Would the ugly, sinful goblins
Ride me on their devil's work?
Snatch me from the hope of Christians
Tie me to some wicked Turk?

Oh, I've held those lips so sacred,
Yes, to love but nothing more.
They are shrines for love's sweet offerings,
One must love them, not adore.

Think, my soul, those lips are mortal,
They were made for man to kiss.
Screw your courage up and steal one,
She won't take it much amiss.

Maybe in her heart she's yearning
For the bliss your fears deny.
If the dream's so sweet, fond lover,
Is it not worth while to try?

TO LUCY

(Could it be forever thus.)

OH, could it be forever thus,
To gaze into your eyes
And feel the thrill of love that wafts
The soul to paradise,

I think that I could live always,
Nor feel a want or woe,
And angels far above would sigh
For joys they could not know.

Cease, world, your never-ending toil,
Cease, Time, your weary flight,
And let me quaff the bliss that fills
The brimming cup to-night.

LOVE'S LAMENT

TAKE me in the forest deep
Where the pine and cypress sleep,
There alone leave me to weep,
For my heart's so weary.

Oh, my soul is sorrow's sheath,
Love has poisoned ev'ry breath,
Love has stung my soul to death,
Woe is all my being.

Woe is me, for I must die,
Wounded by a maiden's eye,
Oh, heart break in one great sigh.
Live I cannot longer.

Maidens all whose hearts are true
Haunt my home of gloomy yew,
Pansies sweet and violets blue
On my coffin scatter.

Fair, warm life and love, good-bye,
Hunted, wounded, let me die,
Slain by a maiden's scornful eye —
For my heart's so weary.

THE OLD BROWN GOURD

WHEN you'd left the dusty road,
The hot and dusty road,
With the sweat a-steaming on your faces,
There was the coolest spot,
Where the span of beech was broad,
And the sun pricked through like shot
The weaving leaves and limbs and shady places.

You galloped down the hill
Through the sand, with right good will,
Where the ferns and mossy trees and boulders
Had scarce ever seen the sun
And were peeping at it still,
And you dropped about a ton,
With the sun and dust that burned and bent
your shoulders.

A gourd hung just in reach,
From an ante-bellum beech,—
A gourd with a big brown bulging belly.
And it held about a quart
That was worth a hundred each
When your breath was hot and short,
And your lungs a-quiver like a jar of jelly.

And you dipped it in a spring
That was just the very thing,
A deep gourd, a cool gourd, a full gourd, dripping
With the water over-flowing from the brim,
And you gulped it at a fling,
With your warm lips to the rim,
And your swallow thrown wide, all parched with
a thirst that was ripping.

No hell-pot of gin
Aburning you like sin,
No vampire drink aflame in the glasses.
Just cold water from the spring,
'Neath the leafy muscadine,
Where the brown marsh robins swing
And the squirrel stops to eye you as he passes.

You drank the full gourd dry,
And you hung it with a sigh
By the long brown crooked finger handle,
And you didn't mind the dust,
Nor the baked sun hot and high,
Nor the saddle like a crust
Of snuff just dripped from off a lighted candle.

Just a drink, a dream, a rest,
And you climbed into your nest,
With a gouge and a trot where the sun was shining.
But you cared no more for that,
For the flame was falling west,
And the water cooled your hat,
And its mem'ry hedged you off from thought of
pining.

Oh, the spring has gone from there,
And the wood has gone from there,

And the bare earth blisters in the June-day.
Oh, the change would break your heart,
For a great brown thoroughfare,
Like a scourge lashed out and tart,
Leaps where the spring and wood once cooled the
noon-day.

'Tis the rattle of the cart,
On its sultry way to mart,
'Tis the whistle of the train by the ferry.
And the sweet, ripe, mellow gourd
Is a form in a dreamer's heart,
It has long gone by the board,
And they've choked the spring that made the road
so cheery.

THE VOICE OF TWILIGHT

NEW lights are ever rising on new worlds,
The yester-morn is pale and dead to-day,
And night, each hectic day-body's shroud enfolds
Its hopes, its promises, its work, its play.
And who can merry-hearted laugh to see
The weird wan shadows gath'ring 'round the
grave,
Time's vault padlocked with iron mystery
Has bartered off the soul that nature gave.
Since ev'ry twilight brings a whispered sigh
For ways its morn shall ne'er behold again,
For all its burdens as it labors by
Sin crushed to worm and dust in dark domain,
The while it plains so lonely, oh, so sad:
"Forgotten, aye and I gave them all I had."

"YE PATIENT STARS"

OH, silv'ry stars in vault of ambient blue,
Your sweet serenity mocks the wrinkled brow,
The sweat of toil, the cruel years that bow
To dust the head of pride — they rule not you.
But man, poor man, whom heartless fates pursue,
The short reprieve they let does scarce allow
His eyes to see the world that hopes endow,
When lo! they snatch his warm life-light from
view.

I sometimes think that in your spheres there burns
A sympathetic ray for ills of man,
Of radiant hope and of consoling truth;
While stricken mute with grief my spirit yearns
Passionately the gulf 'twixt worlds to span,
And hap'ly learn from you eternal youth.

TO MOLLY

THE flowers large and small were in a pet,
The hyacinth was fussing with her curls,
And breaking through the spider's jeweled net,
And daffodils, like flocks of late schoolgirls,
Stood awkwardly and fretted with the breeze.
The sun was not so bright nor hills so green,
The sky was misty, sullen all the trees.
I sat and wondered what the mood could mean.
Again I looked and there was Molly smiling,
And ev'rything was changed, the blue sky beamed,
The flowers breathed their sweets her way be-
guiling,
And Nature's humor gay and pleasant seemed.
Oh, it was strange how Molly's laughing face,
Could to a sullen day give light and grace.

THE FABLE OF THE VAIN STORK

THERE was a stork,—
They called him York:—
The youngest stork of ten.
His bill was long
As is my song,
His legs were very thin.

He lived his days
In various ways,
As storks are won't to do,
Until he came
With idle aim
To sparkling Mikado.

Now that's a stream
Whose waters seem
A very looking-glass.
The birds go there
From ev'rywhere,
And many a nut-brown lass.

They bill and coo,
Their shadows woo,
And bathe their forms divine.
It makes the cheek
Rose-red and sleek
And eyes like light to shine.

Poor York, the stork,
On his first walk,
Into this land quite new
Went stumbling o'er
The fatal shore
And fell in Mikado.

The waters danced
The moonbeams glanced,
With fright the lily shook.
His broad white wings
Scared all the things
That dwelt within the brook.

But York saw naught,
His eyes had caught
His image mirrored there.
He'd never seen,
By odds, I ween,
A thing look half so fair.

His reed-like limbs
Seemed paradigms
Of limbs *par excellence*.
The moon's pure light
Was not so bright
As tuft upon his scone.

The night wore on
The day was gone,
The sun, it rose and set;
A second night
With fresh delight
Young York was gazing yet.

He never tired
Nor aught desired,
But stared as one entranced.
In hosts arrayed
Fish undismayed
E'en to his feet advanced.

While thus he stood
A fox's brood

Approached with noiseless step.
With shifting eye
And step so sly,
Along the brook they crept.

As quiet as fear
Their steps drew near,
They saw poor York and stopped,
And in the shade
By rushes made
On crouching haunches dropped.

Soft on they came
Upon the game,
The largest made a bound,—
Poor York was dead
His foolish head
Was dragged upon the ground.

The fox's eye
Did not descry
The beauty York had seen
But swore, I guess,
With bitterness
Because the stork was lean.

Beware, my friend,
Of such an end,
Beware the looking-glass;
You'll meet York's fate
Sure, soon or late,
And be as big an ass.

FILL THE GLASS

My life to win, my life to win,
I win. What then? 'Tis but to loose,
For time will give me ev'rything,
But Death relentless claims his dues.

I live a very little space,
And leave no trace, for I must die;
And men must work and have no time
To haunt the place where I may lie.

Fill without stint the sparkling glass
And let it pass; I will not care.
Let Fame another's vitals pick,
For me the present's passing fair.

A merry, wholesome, living laugh
I would not draff for honored bones
That grin and keep their gruesome sleep
Beneath a pile of vaunting stones.

A DIRGE

At eve from out the city
The spires rose long and gray,
The wind sighed low in pity
At the close of a winter's day.
But oh, the ache of the dull, dull pain,
That rose to God through the mist and rain,
For one who never shall come again,
In the grave with dead hopes laid.

A death's head grinned at a palace,
And rich one's wailed for a friend.

A beggar raised the chalice
And drank to the bitter end.
And through the rain and cold, cold mist,
Rose wails of woe to Heaven's list,
And lips are drawn that the dead have kissed,
In wild and speechless grief.

And out from the spires of the city,
Tolled low the angelus bell,
Tolled low as if in pity
At the sorrow's mournful knell,
Long, long, long ago
The friends that are gone are lying low,
And they come no more from the long ago.
This is the tale that it tells.

COME, LOVE, LET US ROAM

THE world is awake. Come, love, let us roam
Through the wood where the sun is just peeping,
Where the bright oriole is guarding her home
And the jasmine vines are creeping.

The thrush from the hawthorn is telling her love,
The turtle too softly is cooing,
While the light zephyrs play in the dew-laden grove,
And the mocker the wild rose is wooing.

Then come let us roam ere the morn is well dressed,
And peep at the wealth of her treasures,
Where the squirrel is holding her young to her
breast,
And the butterfly basks in its pleasures.

DOES NOT THAT SMILE SOMETIMES
GROW WEARY?

DOES not that smile sometimes grow weary?
Does it not sometimes hide a tear?
Does not thy heart near break with longing
For some fond hope grown hopeless here?

And does that smile so freely lavished,
Like sunshine beam for one as all?
Does it not hold a deeper meaning
Some lonely heart lives to recall?

It must be so, for all this seeming,
That smile must melt at times to grief,
And e'en in thy life's happy volume
There is at least one blotted leaf.

LOVE'S FRUITION

THE sweetness of love is consumed in a day,
Its bitterness lasts till the head turns gray.
Oh! golden its promise, when the heart beats young,
Ere sorrow has warped it, or falseness has stung

But its bitter is sweet and love never is vain,
Though false be the loved one and deep be the pain,
For its tears, like the showers, though shadows they
cast,
Will awaken the best when those shadows have
passed.

And its throb, like the song that resounds on the
hill,
Will return to the soul and re-echo there still;

And its sweets will come back to sigh in the spring,
When the roses are blooming and mocking-birds
sing.

REMEMBER ME, DEAR

REMEMBER me, dear, when the sun has departed,
Ere the coming of night with silence profound;
Then send me a message of hope happy-hearted,
On the wings of the angels that guard thee around.

When locusts begin their sweet chant in the gloaming,
When the breeze blows sweet from the crab-apple
tree,
Then think of the heart that sadly is roaming
Far, far from the charms of its home and from thee.

And when the cold moon from its white shroud is cast-
ing
Its silver limned light where the leaves part and
meet,
Then think of our promise of love everlasting
That binds us with ties that are ever so sweet.

MOLLY'S FRIENDS, THE FLOWERS

WHAT are the roses so red for, Molly?
Now don't you know? The reason's clear,
To match those in your cheeks, my dear.
Of course that's why they are so red.

What do the jonquils bloom for, Molly?
Why they reflect the golden light
That slumbers in your eyes so bright.
They grow for nothing only that.

Violets, what are they for, Molly?
They bloom to breathe, "Wee one, be kind,
And innocent in heart and mind."
They bloom to love you, little one.

Why is the world so full of flowers
To decorate your sunny curls,
And crown you queen of little girls?
They would not blossom otherwise.

Tell me, then, what are you for, Molly?
Ah, just to play an angel's part,
To give the doubting hope and heart.
I know that that's what you are for.

THINE THE SUN

MANY, many days shall come,
Many suns as brightly shine,
Many faces come and go,
Faces just as fair as thine.

Viewing life's kaleidoscope,
Ev'ry change enraptured holds,
And a thrill comes with each scene
As its beauty still unfolds.

Trust me then, nor fickle deem,
If in other eyes I smile,
Seeing in the beauty there
Something like thee all the while.

And though other days shall come,
None shall lie so near my heart,
And though other faces smile,
None such pleasure can impart.

Other lights like meteors bright
Flash across my azure sky,
Thine the sun which once removed,
Life would wither, love would die.

THREE MAIDENS

THREE maidens came walking from Dartmouth
town,
From Dartmouth town of fair renown;
And the tallest spake to the others:
"I'd like to be a queen," quoth she,
"And rule a royal land;
And men should scour the earth and sea
To do my least command.
I'd hold my head so proudly thus,
And wear the grandest crown."
So spake the tallest of the three
As they came from Dartmouth town.

Three maidens came walking from Dartmouth
town,
And the west was burned red as the sun went
down,
And the fairest spake to the others:
"Above all I'd like to be," quoth she,
"The fairest woman on earth:
That men would waste their lives to see,
And sing my beauty's worth.
Oh, I should make hearts bold with smiles,
Or break them with my frown."
Thus spake the fairest of the three,
As they came from Dartmouth town.

Three maidens came walking from Dartmouth
town,

And the meadows were green and the hills were
brown;

And the third of the three was silent.

She looked to the south with dreamy eyes,

She thought, Oh, heart, be true.

One knight shall come both brave and wise

To fight the world for you.

And none shall be so fair to him,

For all that I'm slight and brown.

And they walked, three maidens in silence,

As they came from Dartmouth town.

OH, COME WITH ME!

Oh, come with me and sing

Of days that spring

With hopeful wing

From flowers in the garnished east.

The future holds such bliss

To quaff I wiss,

A lover's kiss,

If thou wilt come and roam with me.

If love has joys to prove,

Then life should move

Into its groove,

And share its blessing while it may.

Oh, tarry not, my dear!

The youthful seer

To nature's ear

Has breathed his teaching through the years.

Observe the warbling bird,

He has not heard

With doubt the word,
His trust has taught his heart to sing.

And man alone of all
In evil's thrall,
Has mixed with gall
Delights that should have been serene.

Be wise, Love! put aside
All doubt and pride
And thou, my bride,
And I shall sing of dearer days

That glide like ships full-sail
Into the trail,
The golden veil
That meets the waters in the west.

THE PASSING OF LOVE

A FINE catapilla was Love,
With eight great peacock eyes,
And his touch could thrill like my lady's glove,
Oh, Love, oh, Love, thou breeder of sighs.

He came to the valley of Nod,
Where the dream flowers under the sky
Looked up to Beauty, their only god,
And Beauty looked down on Traumeri.

The Traumeri of the flowers,
A plain in the land of Nod,
Where rules the rose o'er fragrant bowers
With a sunset scepter of golden-rod.

They had all their sweets at heart
When Love came on the winds of the west.
But he sang at the doors of their souls with
such art,
That they opened the portals and gave him
their best.

Love ruined the flowers at Nod,
In the valley of Traumeri.
For when he departed Love was their god,
But he paid them in grief and a soul-wasting
sigh.

Alas, they are the saddest flowers,
Grown callous to sun and dew;
With a hopeless hope and a dream of those
hours,
And that Love will come back and his vows
renew.

Poor little fickle, false god!
He lived and he died in a day.
And the desert of heart in the land of Nod,
Rend their petals and drudge their lives
away.

And Beauty looks down on the bowers,
From the blue of a wonderful sky,
But the shadings are pale and harsh to the
flowers,
Since the passing of Love from Traumeri.

THE VIOLET NEVER IS SCORNFUL

THE violet never is scornful,
For her nature's too high and apart.
She's the model of love in its whiteness,
She's the balm of the weeping heart.

Never a rose that the warm winds winnow
Is aught but a vain coquette,
And for all the caresses she gives you,
There's bitter to pay for the debt.

And here in this violet I find me
A twin to my fancies of thee.
A boon, Love, though roses be blooming,
Let the violets remind you of me.

AWAY WITH THEE, LOVE

AWAY with thee, love, thou art weak with desire,
Sighs are thy heralds and a ruin of youth's fire.
Give me no more of thy bliss or thy pain,
Tyrant, thou art in a barren domain.
So ho-ho! for a life of adventure and fun,
With my dog, my horse, and my good trusty gun.

The cat's cruel claws and treacherous wiles
Don't work half the ruin of a fair woman's smiles;
She will slave and sell with a smile if she can,
And a man in love is a womanish man.
So ho-ho! for a life of adventure and fun,
With my dog, my horse, and my good trusty gun.

For the voice of the forest, the blast of my horn,
The bay of the hounds and the smile of the morn,

Oh, here's to them all, and the life of a ranger,
Whose courtship is paid to the shy court of danger.
So ho-ho! for a life of adventure and fun,
With my dog and my horse and good trusty gun.

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE ROSE

A BUTTERFLY, with gaudy wings,
Upon an April day
Went forth with heart and eyes alert
To see the world, they say.

He passed o'er fresh green fields and woods,
And flowers wooed his stay,
But still that heartless butterfly
Flew on untouched, they say.

He flirted here, he flirted there,—
The daisy's eye was wet
With heart-dropped dew as off he went;
She sighed that they had met.

But ere his life had well begun
That gallant came to woe.
For love had seen his dauntless flight,
And sworn his overthrow.

A rose was blooming red and rare,
And breezes came and sighed,
And went away with heavy hearts,
Their prayers for love denied.

And hither came that butterfly,
And here prolonged his stay,
And fanned and wooed, but all in vain,
That rosebud, so they say.

The proud rose coldly spurned his love,
And flirted with the breeze,
Until that butterfly fell sick
And died of heart's disease.

Oh, you, my love, are like that rose,
And I the butterfly.
But have a heart, unlike the rose,
Let not your lover die.

TO MIGNON

ALONE, I mused upon the beach,
And in the western sky
The rosy tints of evening mixed
To form a deeper dye.

Upon the ocean's heaving breast
The beacon's restful gleam
Burned peacefully and seemed to lend
A longing to my dream.

I thought how often we had kept
Our tryst there, thou and I,
And in my heart a yearning woke
And echoed in a sigh.

I know not what thy thoughts were then,
Thy dark eyes' mystery;
But mine were like the sunset glow
With radiance caught from thee.

Sweet thoughts, yet dashed with bitterness,
To think they could not last;
Long treasured as are withered leaves,
In remembrance of the past.

For fate has written we must part,
And yet, when I am gone,
'Twould please if lingered in thy heart
A thought of me, Mignon.

OCTOBER SONG

COME out to Bass, if you wish to see,
The red-leafed gum and the golden cherry,
Come out as many as you will, be merry,
But come out one with a charm for me.

For there's a field of blue and golden-rod,
Golden-rod,
Golden-rod,
There's a field of blue and golden-rod,
At Bass in brown October.

Come out with the birds for a last love song,
There's nothing so rare as a rose in December,
A precious few buds e'en keep through November,—
And October, love, doesn't last very long.

There are secrets to whisper and sweets to be told.
And what though the season too late is for mating,
A dream of October, when lilac is waiting,
Is a blossom that cannot wither from cold.

LOVE'S OFFERING

LATE, when the pulsing stars lay close
Against the canopied vault of night,
Still lamps to guide love's downy wing,
Unchained my thoughts to thee took flight.

Thy name to reverent lips arose
Like murmured prayer of anchorite,
And drowned the voice of suffering
In welcome floods of pure delight.

Hope, fanning fancy into being,
Saw heaven in your golden eyes,
Consent to long unanswered pleas,
Breathed softly in contented sighs.
And all our fondest plans agreeing,
Brought peace to us, and in the skies
A fadeless light and fragrant breeze
Made earth a very paradise.

O'erhead in high majestic trees
The cricket's tiny sounding bell
Announced a sacrifice supreme:
A heart the offering, and fell
Thy own, at Love's adoring knees,
Upon thy altar. Favor well
The gift, oh, light of love's esteem,
Nor break the elevating spell.

SWEET MARY AND ME

SWEET Mary came over the meadows,
The mystical meadows alone,
Meadow larks flew over the fresh dewy clover,
And my heart beat "Mary, my own."

I slipped to her side in a jiffy,
And I whispered a word in her ear.
And oh, weren't her blushes like red in the
rushes
As I kissed her,— Mary, my dear.

It was brave, don't you think? I do, very,
And I warrant you would, if you knew,
For she's so contrary, this same lovely Mary,
With never a moment for you.

But this all occurred in the meadows,
Where none but a poet may walk,
Where winds never hurtle the curl of the myrtle
And frosts never light on the stalk.

For when I did meet with sweet Mary,
My heart made a leap for my mouth,
And fond, dreaming love grew limpsy all over
Like a lilac bush caught in a drouth.

For she passed like a ship in fair weather,
With a smile that you barely could see;
While I went creeping away nearly weeping.
Was there ever a lover like me?

LAUGH WHEN YOUR HEART IS LIGHTEST

LAUGH when your heart is lightest, love,
Dance the gay hours away.
Shine out the fairest and brightest, love,
Star of the ev'ning's array.

May I then harbor your sorrow, love,
E'en though forgotten I be?
This from your life I would borrow, love,
Care that your wyrd may decree.

When, to sweet music you listen, love,
Bearing its message in rhyme;
And at your coming glisten, love,
Eyes with their bliss at its prime.

Though I may long for a token, love,
Yet should your heart so entwine,
Causing my own to be broken, love,
Break it to honor your shrine.

JOHN DEAN'S PHILOSOPHY

JOHN DEAN was a rich old bach'lor,
As all of the world must know,
And the workings of sixty Winters
Had whitened his head like the snow.

But he'd friends, had this happy old fellow,
Yes, friends a good thousand if one;
For friends, you know, follow money
As sure as the day does the sun.

He was king of valleys and forests,
And sleek horses fed in his stalls,
And servants he owned by the hundreds,
And parasites swarmed in his halls.

And yet on this mellow evening,
As he sat with his silk slippers on,
And listened to the amorous ditties
Of birds as they played on his lawn,

Like a serpent a brooding crept o'er him,
And he railed in a way so absurd,
That the slave at the door stared in wonder,
And could scarcely believe that she heard:

"A curse on these hell given riches,
They have beggared my life of its best,
All nothing but bubbles and tinsel,
With a conscience that never can rest.

"No man has amassed such a fortune,
I've all that one's heart could enthral.
And yet I am sick and disgusted,
Disgusted and tired of it all.

"I've made wealth, but the means, were they
open?
I've wrung it from hands that were poor,
I've ruined many lives that were hopeful,
I've turned the half-starved from my door.

"And there's none who for Dean will be pray-
ing,
When he kneels at the judgment seat,
But hundreds will clamor for justice,
For the justice that surely is meet.

"The doctor may grieve for a moment,
That his wages have come to an end.
But friends — poor Dean, you have never,
In all of your life had a friend.

"Tush! dry up your silly old prattle,
Better friend a man never knew; —
Can't it buy you a place up in heaven,
If it buy you the church's best pew?

"Ugh! my nerves are playing the devil,
I'll call for a friend and a drink.
On a quest of new fun I must hie me,
I am getting too ancient to think."

META

THERE were flowers and thorns in the path we
came,

It was happy and dreary at times,
For it led through the castle, the cottage and hut
And ruin where close ivy climbs.

We have trudged through the dust with the sun
burning hot,

We have trodden the grass when its beams
With the softest of light warmed a glow in the west,
Like the city rose-stained of our dreams.

Sometimes we have smiled and again we have sighed,
Sometimes we have wept as we toiled,
When our spirits too weary their burdens to bear,
Felt the pain of a dear purpose foiled.

Sometimes too our hearts beat happy with love,
And for love we have wasted away,
For the castles of beauty we dreamed in the clouds,
That were built and destroyed in a day.

And lo! in the eve we have come to this end,
In the shade of the tall marble stone,
Where the breeze is the rustle of ghostly wings
And the sleeper lies cold and alone.

AN ANSWER TO A REQUEST FOR A POEM

Go ask the mocking-bird to sing,
His notes are always pure and true,
Unmatched his happy rhythmic swing,
And heard for e'er 'tis always new.

Go read in ev'ry fragrant flower
The poem that is written there;
You'll find more beauty in an hour
Than I could ever hope or dare.

Just teach your heart to beat in time
To Nature's song on ev'ry breeze.
True rhythm then you'll find and rhyme,
Man cannot equal works like these.

But tempt me not on sacred grounds —
A fool can at an altar kneel;
Its understanding tops his bounds,
I'm ignorant and only free.

THE SEPARATION

THE day has gone and all its sun and flowers,
Ah, fair they were the while we held them ours.

The little while, but is it worth the fine
That I still pay to claim those dreams for mine?

I had the blossom, now the pricking thorn,
While to each sorrow sorrows new are born,

For ev'ry thought that rushes back to thee
Gets from its sweet an added misery.

Oh, idle dreams that have no gift nor gain,
Whose coffin sweets contain such bitter pain,

Why is it, pray, that I would never give
Thy poor dead day for all the days that live?

I. K. S.

SHE comes from the dreams of the sweet sacred past,
From the gold of her youth as we pictured her last;
With a smile on her lips and a light in her eyes,
And a bloom in her cheeks that the lily white dyes.

She comes with the breath of the honey-suckle bloom,
She comes and she lightens my life of its gloom,—
With the love that she bore in the days that are gone,
With the love she bore then and I know she bears on.

Though tears we may shed that she's with us no more,
And our torn hearts may ache for the sweet days of
yore,
Yet we know that our darling is happy somewhere,
And we live in fond hopes of meeting her there.

AUTUMN DREAMINGS

IN a sun-woofed Southern homestead
Sits a grandam thin and gray,
And sweet faded smiles of mem'ry
O'er her withered features play.

Sits she on the cool veranda,
Where the sunbeams come and go
Through the morning glory's mazes,
And the South winds softly blow.

Through her specks she sees but dimly,
Gently vacant is her gaze,
As she feebly dreams and fancies,
Dreams of youth and bygone days.

Lie neglected on her apron
Threads and needles all forgot,
While she draws the thread of mem'ry
Rav'ling out the tangled knot.

Comes the song of cotton pickers,
Muffled in the dreamy haze
Of the mellow Indian summer,
Like an evening hymn of praise.

Turns the mill-wheel in the meadow,
Rousing with its rhythmic creak
Other fond forgotten mem'ries,
And their short existence eke.

Sigh the pine trees on the hillside
But so faint, so soft and low,
That they seem to her as echoes
From the days of long ago.

Snap! the thread is gently broken
And she slumbers in her chair;
And the mocking-birds are singing
In the myrtles ev'rywhere.

AFTER SUMMER

'Tis the home of the violets' bloom
Where the wild pea blossoms now,
And the fields are brown with the waving
broom,
Or white with the cotton bough.

The winds that the violet kissed
Are sweet to the wild pea now,
But the voices are sighing for something missed
On the bristling hillock's brow.

For the blood tide ebbs from the wood,
From the wild flowers yellow and red,
And the hopes for which the violets stood,
In the pea and the sage are dead.

SONNET

'Twas yester-day, a little day, a space,
As short as April's moods, when vengeful ire
Swept hosts of injured hearts like forest fire,
And marked this man with scorn and with disgrace;
To-day he stands before them, face to face,
And where their wrath? O'er spangled roof and spire
Ring out their cheers, as if their hearts' desire
Had come victorious their happy hearths to grace.
Fooled puppets in a vaunting trickster's hands,
Oh, weakling natures, pliable as clay,
You take the buffet like a cringing cur,
And when one rises in his right and stands
More than yourself a man, you slink away
To fawn and lick the hand that gave the slur!

WRITTEN IN AN OLD CHURCHYARD

FROM silver to gold, from gold to gray,
In gorgeous tints and rich array;
From glory to gloom at close of day,
So change, so pass, our lives away.

We fold our shroud about our breast,
And pensive seek our silent rest,
To break the web of mystery,
And meet a dread eternity.

And even while uncertain light
Of other worlds directs our sight,
We turn from realms of woe or bliss
To take and give the farewell kiss.

And fondly dream that in those eyes,
We strongly love and dearly prize,
The tears will start in bitter woe
And wet our graves with ceaseless flow.

Oh, treasured hopes so falsely placed,
Oh, pleading eyes so soon effaced!
Thy passing is a dream, in truth,
Forgotten as the days of youth.

A tear was shed above thy grave,
A stone was made thy mem'ry's slave;
And then the time went swiftly by,
And those who wept give not a sigh.

The stones have fallen from their toil,
The cattle graze about the soil,
And one lone heart that knew thee not
Bemoans this sad neglected spot.

To brood and learn the truth a while,
With fancies bitter that revile
Man's shallow nature in the dust,
His failure of a sacred trust.

For time must come when I shall sleep
Like thee, while shady brambles creep
About my head with matted vines
And hide the coffin's grassy lines.

And soon no stone will stand at all,
And soon the trees will rot and fall;
The farmer here will turn his plow,
And none will weep as I do now.

THE DANCE OF THE ZEPHYRS

OVER hill and over valley,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
Through the wood and fields we sally,
Yo ho-ho!
Dancing in the early morning,
When the day is faintly dawning,
And the world with sleep is yawning,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
Dancing in the early morning,
Yo ho-ho!

Dancing where the fireflies glisten,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
You can hear us if you listen,
Yo ho-ho!
For we never stop nor tarry,
Lovers love and lovers marry,
Neither we so light and airy
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
Never stay we, never tarry,
Yo ho-ho!

Dancing where a host of roses,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
On the dewy briar reposes,
Yo ho-ho!
Light we trip on glist'ning heather,
O'er the pastures green together,
Breaking buds from viny tether,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
Whisp'ring folk-songs o'er the heather,
Yo ho-ho!

Dancing through the mid-day hours,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!

Fanning fond exhausted flowers,
Yo ho-ho!

By the brae and brook and river,
Where the aspens shake and shiver
And the leaves of tulip quiver,

Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!
By the winding brook and river,
Yo ho-ho!

Through the sunbeams bright and cherry,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!

Through the moonbeams cold and merry,
Yo ho-ho!

Never wearied, never saddened,
Never rested, never gladdened,
Never pleased and never maddened,
Yo ho-ho, yo ho-ho!

Never saddened, never gladdened,
Yo ho-ho!

ROBIN FLYING SOUTHWARD

ROBIN, robin flying southward,
Tarry, pray you, hear my plea,
I've a message for you, robin,
Will you bear it home for me?

When across the wide Potomac,
Far beyond the sleet and snow,
First your eyes espy the woodland
Where the sweet magnolias grow.

Speeding onward, never tarry,
Weary winged until you hear

Mississippi's winding waters
Murmur faintly in your ear.

Near it stands a home, you'll know it,
Oak and myrtle twine their leaves
Round the porch and moss hangs thickly
From the old brow-beaten eaves.

Had you passed in happier hours,
All its echoes then were gay,
Rippling like the sparkling waters,
Laughing, singing all the day.

On its roof no shadows rested,
Brightly gleamed the warm sunbeams,
For our hearts were young then, robin,
Scarred not yet with sorrow's seams.

Childhood's joys are gone forever,
Just a mem'ry, that is all,
Ling'ring round the dear old home place,
In the grove and in the hall.

All a mem'ry fondly cherished,
And a mother watching now,
Sees the change and feels the burden,
Shows its weight in silvered brow.

Only three of all that gathered
'Round that hearth you'll see to-night.
Only three, and they are silent,
Gazing in the warm fire-light.

Of the rest some few are scattered,
Many answer now no more
When their names are called or spoken,
They have passed life's riddle o'er.

Only three, give them this message,
Tell them that my eyes are wet,
Thinking of them, and the sorrow
Of our parting chills me yet.

They are waiting for you, robin,
List'ning for you in the wood,
In your song a friend they'll welcome
That will do their kind hearts good.

They will say, "Ah! there's the robin,"
And their thoughts will backward stray,
Backward seeking for some solace
From the sweets of yester-day.

And our hearts will meet together
By the brook and bend and brae,
And we all will bless you, robin,
Bless you for your cheerful lay.

When they gather 'round the fire-side,
Sighing for a missing face,
Bid them cheer and comfort borrow
From a bygone ev'ning's grace,

Lighting with the past the present,
And rememb'ring that the years
Bud-like op'ning to our vision,
Hold some recompense for tears.

Robin, robin, pray you, tarry!
Onward, onward from my sight,
But my lonely heart will follow
In your steady southward flight.

WITHERED VIOLETS

VIOLETS, dear, dead violets,
Kisses that came in our dreams,
Were spirits of violets dying,
Leaving the message they bore
With life's last beams
From lips we adore,
While unknowing for love we were
sighing.

Violets, dear, dead violets,
Relics we kiss with our hearts
Wrung for the days that have perished,
Dead, but sweet with the breath
That mem'ry imparts,
Like flowers in death,
With fondest fidelity cherished.

Violets, dear, dead violets,
Fate brings you no second spring,
Nor to us, life, a returning
Hope for the past we review,
For the wakening
Of a thrill we knew,
For which in our souls we are yearning.

MAIDEN OF PUERTO BARRIOS

OH, bright-eyed maid of Puerto Barrios,
Daughter of a planet that heavenward burns.
Far o'er the rollicking, frolicking sea,
That rocks and seethes and writhes and turns,
And whips the hungry foam in our lea,
I am looking thy way to Puerto Barrios.

What news dost thou know from Puerto Barrios?
Where hangs the moon? O'er the silver bay?
O'er the reeling plaza or mountain heights?
While old Don Miguel thunders away
With his band of two and scrapes out delights,
For the heaving, dancing Puerto Barrios.

Sweet maiden Mignon, heaven never was nearer,
For none had a foot or an ankle like thine.
And I, oh I was the sea at high tide
That kissed a land of pearl and wine:
By the sunlight of love, a sea deep dyed,
Of passion for the pearl of Puerto Barrios.

I am drunk yet, exceedingly so, with the mem'ry,
My head still bends to thy sweet laced breast,
Where the jealous bodice, how I envied its
thread,
Hugged closer the conscious buds in unrest,
Turbulent with love and a palpitant dread.
And here am I leaving old Puerto Barrios.

And what's the world but Puerto Barrios?
Its sands, its waters, and its snatches of song,
Its purple crowned peaks and cahoon palm
shade,
And a bark on the bay just gliding along,
And all on thy breast forgotten, fond maid,
The eternal summer of Puerto Barrios.

Oh, the good old world at Puerto Barrios!
That loved the sun like a bride doth her ring,
How he smiled in the wave at the shadow he
cast
Or gazed at the flight of the gulls' hollowed wing.
Oh, girl! are they sold to Time, are they past?
Those good old days at Puerto Barrios?

A ROSE, A LILAC, AND A LADY

If you were a hummingbird, where would you light?
If you were a butterfly, which would you woo?
If you were a honey-bee passing in flight,
And seeing these flowers, say, what would you do?

There's fresh honey'd dew on the lips of the rose
The weary-winged bee in his flight rarely meets,
The lilac full crammed with perfume o'erflows,
Is it there you would settle and surfeit with sweets?

The third is a treasure as dear as 'tis rare,
Flowers and gems in confusion combined,
I know of no bloom which would aptly compare,
A rosebud as sweet never blushed or repined.

If you were a hummingbird, where would you light?
If you were a butterfly, which would you woo?
If you were a honey-bee passing in flight,
And seeing these flowers, say, what would you do?

TO LEONORE

WHEN with threads of tangled hours
Time has woven in his task
Many figures, thorns, and flowers,
Shall remembrance be my task?

Will these pleasant days neglected,
From thy bosom fade away,
Soon forgotten, soon rejected,
For the joys of another day?

When that comes may this remind thee,
Old friends dear are sometimes best.
And some one forgot behind thee
May be truer than the rest.

FARE-THEE-WELL!

FARE-THEE-WELL! and may the fairies
Follow thee with presents rare,
Bring thee love and smiles and sunshine,
Bring thee joy unmixed with care.

Could my hand adorn thy pathway,
Heaven's brightest light should bind
All thy walks and ev'ry shadow,
Falling, should be cast behind.

Fare-thee-well! and when some other's
Eyes reflect the love in thine,
Those same eyes divinely beaming,
That would never answer mine.

Let thy heart a moment pity,
Where it could not sympathize,
Let thy thoughts with sadness picture
Scenes like these 'neath Southern skies.

Where one heart shall fondly linger,
Counting sacred ev'ry spot,
That thy spirit still may visit,
Even though I be forgot.

MY LOVE, ARE YOU TRUE?

THE moonbeams have found the white rose's bower,
And the red rose is blushing with thoughts of the hour.

My love, are you true? My love, are you true?
Oh, the red rose is I and the white rose is you.

The red rose with passion divinely is burning,
But the white no kindred spark is returning.

My love, are you true? My love, are you true?
Oh, the red rose is I and the white rose is you.

Alas! for the hopes, for the dreams that are shattered.
With the sweet-scented leaves ere the morn they'll be
scattered.

My love, are you true? My love, are you true?
Oh, the red rose is I and the white rose is you.

And the white rose will live in the sweets of its bower,
And the red die forgotten a lorn wasted flower.

My love, are you true? My love, are you true?
Oh, the red rose is I and the white rose is you.

SHOW ME HOW TO FIND YOU

COME, my own, for I adore you,
Come, my love, I'm waiting for you.
Life has had of dreams enough,
Fancies burned are worthless snuff.
Show me how to find you.

Love, I've tried so long and often,
Break, hard heart, oh, break or soften.
Little sterling, I'm your man,
Love you less I never can.
Show me how to find you.

Sweeting, grant me from your rosy
Pouting lips a precious poesy.
Oh, be kind, for Heaven knows,
Naught like you or blooms or grows.
Show me how to find you.

FORGOTTEN

I AM forgotten,
No more, just that.
The round gold rim
Of morning's brim —
No more,— the bat
Is flying there, is flying there.

I am forgotten,
No more, just that;
And heart and brain
Have parted twain:
Oh, curse the bat,
The leathern bat, that's flying there!

When I remember
It makes me mad;
I cannot think,
Some witch's drink
My blood has fed
And makes a hell of thought for me.

Oh, I had fancied
And hoped such things!
For earth and sea
Had promised me
A swallow's wings
To bear my pleasure loving heart.

To skim and follow
The southern sun
From east to west
On flow'ry quest,
Till life had run
Its golden sands and slept, and slept.

And now forgotten,
Fair dreams, good-bye.
For love is all
And holds my pall.
Or live or die,
Dear love is all in life or death.

OUR DREAMS

Now the crowd has gone; I have stood with them,
Found them entertaining, blew
Up the fire of comradeship, and it warmed,
Served my want. Had I forgotten you?

Thus I stood with them, laughed with them,
Valued them in the dim half light
Of fancy; but now I pass out, cross over
To myself and can judge things aright.

Here I stand again with you, after all,
In the white, sure light of unfailing truth
See them pass like shadows where I stood, and for
Their passing have not any ruth.

Oh, the radiant halls of mem'ry I now walk
through —
See you here midst the flowers —
A dream, yet more than real as I see you
In the far budding summer that was ours.

THE SUMMONS

SWEET, sweet are the fields,
And soft the sunset's lines,
And beyond are the purple hills
And the mystic gloom of the pines.

Sky-line that bends above
As far as the eye can see,
Far away, far away, dim,
Will it ever be known to me?

Sky-line and pines and light
As dim as the far away,
There's a secret you hide beyond you
That I can not read to-day.

Faint, faint is the light
And my eyes are straining sore
For the day that has passed beyond
The pines to come no more.

While I wait and wonder and listen
And ache with the mystery
Of the summons that soon will come
From over the pines for me.

FOR YOU

THERE'S a new moon pin
In a scarf of blue,
And a dandelion catch
On an emerald shoe.
Come, love, in the twilight,
Come, my love's eyes

With lips of sweet sighs
And soft replies,
While the red rose falls on its thorn and
dies
With love its heart consuming.

In hedge-rows of silver are blooming
All fanciful flowers of purple and blue,
That are sighing for you
Or dying for you;
Come, my sweet true,
Ev'ry-thing in this valley
Is of heart shape and size,
Throbbing, stripped bare
To bask in your eyes.

LOVE'S POWER

THE night flower has opened its petals
And the star dust is damp with the dew,
The moon leaf, a lily leaf crescent,
Is Cupid's summer canoe.

Love, come out from the blossom,
Love, come out from the skies,
Love, come out from the soul depths
Of my love's sunny eyes.

And the flower may fold and wither,
And the moon leaf blacken and fall,
And the star dust fade in the heavens,
But I'll miss them not at all.

For my love is the world and its blossom,
The stars, the moon — and it's plain
That never a bit would I miss them,
Since my love could give them again.

SPRING SONG

THE sun went out and swept the snow
And beat his broom across the pole,
The red bird sat and sang "Heigh ho!"
The coal man sold not a bucket of coal —
Ho ho, ding ding!
In the grapevine swing,
Your robin no longer's a rover.

The titmouse pipes "Tra-la, tra-la!"
And love is busy as a bee,
The merman sights for a summer star,
Light note, bright note, Mary and me,
Ho ho, ding ding!
Hear the milkmaid sing,
Four leaves have found her a lover.

Sweet Bess is shy, with downcast eye,
And poor loon Tom is timid too,
But the trundles are coming bye and bye,
For the green boughs swing in the sunny blue —
Though a kiss in spring
Is a little thing
As you'll find the green world over.

ALL THE WAY

THE roses that twine by Tuscalamita
Are stripped of their blooms, but the sunbeams' caress
Is as fond as it was when the roses were sweeter,
In the bloom of their summer-day's gorgeousness.

Then, believe me, true love can never know treason;
Though youth when it ripens is bound to decay.

As the sun shines on regardless of season,
So true love will go with us all the way.

The heart that loves thee so fondly this hour,
When thy hair is like gold and thy lips are like wine,
Shall hold thee but closer when Time shall shower
His snows on the charms that to-day are divine.

QUEEN OF THE CARNIVAL

ROSSETTI comes with his colors and brush,
Catches the rose ere it falls from the bush,
Paints love in the eye;
So they hang there and cannot die,
Though they look sad. Then you come to gush.

I am only the voice and bring no more
Than an echo. I saw the ribbon she wore,
Saw the smile run along
Her lips, heard her heart's song,
And recall it thus — Have you heard it before?

I shall tell you the tale in my humble manner —
Say the crowd has gone and near one banner,
Some fond spirit remains
To the death of the blatant strains,
To get the lesson of sadness plainer.

And while the banners are drooping like hearse plumes,
That waved to the joyous brass and drums,
And the candles burn,
Reminiscent at every turn,
And the gorgeous flowers are heavy in the rooms:

The insistent pleading of a minor key,
Asking "Why, why?" eternally,

With the hidden hint
Of a half-told throbbing heart complaint,
That the pedant base turned to mockery,

Will clamor still in its troublesome treble,
Like the round tide wave about a pebble,
When the foolish base,
With Comus and full-cheek'd face
Has followed on the heels of the noisy rabble.

So this story — And I shall tell it to you —
What if the eyes are no longer blue
Like the bottle flower,
On the lips no longer the shower
Of fragrance the laughing lips pursue?

Here is the tale: that once in a city
As quaint as a grandmother's grandmother's ditty,
Where the people were gay
The livelong living day,
And the night; for mirth they had not any pity —

On a carnival eve, at a window in a square,
Where the banners waved below and the blare
Of music swept by,
And the parade that dazzled the eye
Swept by like a sunburst without a care;

Two soldiers leaned out from the window frame
Where the queen of the carnival rode like a flame,
With the king by her side,
And thousands were cramped in the wide
Old streets, and cheered as the maskers came.

Then one of the soldiers swung out and threw
A single rose as might I or you.

Like blood was its red,
It fell on the queen's pretty head,
And a shy little glance she upwards threw.

The king scowled down on the gaping crowd.
He scowled again at the rose in his proud,
Cold way. But the queen,
Her even eyebrows serene,
Pinned the rose in her belt where it bloomed and
glowed.

The crowd looked up at the window. A maid
Was heard to remark,— and a score or more said,—
“Does he love the queen?”
What a pretty, pretty scene!”
And sighing they turned to watch the parade.

An hour later by the city clock,
Up the blazing stairs, catching her frock
Through her dainty glove,
With the music pleading, “Love, love,”
Stepped the queen and the royal dance hall shook.

“Long live the queen! Long live the king!”
Till the music died in the gladsome ring
Of the welcoming shout,
And to the waltz tune swung out
The couples like peach blossoms scattered in spring.

Hands clasped, riotous breast to breast,
Eyes glancing and meeting, shy at the test —
A touch too near;
Perhaps a word dropped in the ear —
A blush, something more, a soul in unrest.

Then straight through the hall as the music ceased,
And the dancers fell back a little released,

To toy with a fan
Or kerchief, and gloating Pan
Leered out from the palms, his mood well pleased,

Straight through the billows of revelry
Like a ship dividing a summer sea,
Careless and fine,
Even to the queen's own shrine,
Strode a masterly man in a masterly way.

"You have worn my rose, Genevieve," he said;
"Now choose you and wear my love instead.
Can you leave
This make-believe, Genevieve?
Be a queen when these flowers and masks are dead?"

You have seen the mantling color rush
At the voice of the spring and bloom in the bush,
Then pale to a ghost
In the fingers of April's first frost.
So bloomed and faded the maiden's blush.

And many a little ripple ran,
Arch smiles and curious glances began,
With perhaps here and there
A stormy weather stare
Of jealous desire from woman or man.

"Genevieve, a soldier can't make his stay,
To-day he is here and to-morrow away,
Perhaps to live
For a song or die, Genevieve,
For a woman's love in some safer day.

"Am I abrupt? A soldier, Genevieve,
Cannot learn soft words nor stoop to deceive.

Would you have me deny,
Hide my love from a prying eye?
Dance in waiting outside, till your friends give me
leave?

“No. See, let them know it for what it is,
No hiding in whispers nor stolen kiss.
No faint love is mine.
Here I stand on the battle line
As a soldier should. Do you take it amiss?

“Genevieve!” There his pleading faltered and broke.
For the queen was plainly vexed, and spoke
To some one, the king
Perhaps, on some trivial thing.
But her temples were poppies and her fingers shook.

“Genevieve!” Once more he said it, in a way —
I know not just how — as a man might pray.
But the queen was vexed
Still more, and on some pretext,
Moved haughtily. Some man laughed, they say.

Some giggled, some pitied, and gossiped all,
Some spoke of love with a sneer. Then the call
Of the dance complained —
And ever the morning gained
On the night, and the dance still held its thrall.

Ten thousand men on a dusty road
Kept pace to the drums, saw the daylight broad
Flame up and burn
Like a candle over an urn;
And along with them hopped the swart war toad.

One of them never came back again.
A hero he'd 'a' been, had he not been slain,

Who took his death leave
Whispering "Genevieve."
They buried him, praised him, forgot him in the main.

But the one-time queen of the carnival,
In the quiet watches grew tragical —
Shed tears, wrote his name
On paper; before a frame
With his likeness burned incense, grew pale.

And so for five years, to her god of clay,
She was true. Then she failed, and one fine day
In the budding Spring,
'Neath the flowers she married the king —
Made a splendid match, the people say.

SHADOWS

You are there by your hearth-fire,
And I am here quite alone.
Up the flue of my chimney
Go my dreams as the smoke is blown.

And the winds that are roaring
Through the twigs of your cold roof-tree.
Bring the smoke from your chimney
With your after dark dreams to me.

Through the pine trees beating,
Merrily for all the bare walks,
Comes the smoke from your chimney
Over comatose briars and stalks.

The cricket is singing
Over there, but over here
By my fire it is silent
And a lean shadow creeps near.

There are the bare branches,
They feel and reach so far
In the past, in the summer
Where the ghosts of our best days are.

We have woven together
A wreath, have we not? And the flowers
They were sweet in the gath'ring
And woven through blessed hours.

We were friends, we were children,
We played in the broad light of the sun;
The green leaves were a million,
And the birds were spirits of fun.

Now the wings have vanished,
I saw a sparrow at dusk
Scratching with his blue legs
For a cold and hungry husk.

But there was no color
In his wings, no song in his throat.
The dead leaves were frosted
And not one single note

Of felicity sounded;
And the shadow closer came
By my side and grew
In the light of the dying flame.

I feel like a prophet,
I can not say how soon;
To-day or to-morrow
With the change of the sun or moon,

We shall change forever,
And our wreath shall lie in the cold

Outside of the summer
In the wet winter and the mold.

Could we sit here together
Do you think, night after night?
And neither grow weary
Shut between four walls so tight?

The world out beyond us,
We two the whole winter long
Hear the swift clock ticking
And miss no summer's song?

The little more, so little,
And what is it, that must burn
That must weld, must change us —
Put our ashes in one urn?

I cannot solve it.
Only this I know. I sit here
And dream of evenings
And long — you know how — for you,
near.

Here you come with your grace,
Your daintiness like lace,
Make my heart beat happy,
Teach me to know truth from your face.

Teach me God is a woman
In heart; mend my doubts, make me true,
Show me to look upwards
To climb hand in hand with you.

And yet, sweet, 'tis Winter
Outside, here, everywhere,
But where you are dreaming;
It is only Summer there.

Ah, the dreams you are dreaming
Heaven hear, I would give you those,
Dear eyes wide-dreaming,
Hope warm you while the Winter blows.

My heart's leaves have fallen
To-night and the winds that strain
At my window casement
Have swept them away with the rain.

LAST NIGHT

LAST night Lorenzo 'woke again,
Jessica by his side.
He heard the mocking-bird complain,
And bantered with his bride.

Last night Nerissa shrived her lord,
And gave him back her ring,
Smiling that he had broke his word
About so grave a thing.

Last night sweet Juliet told her love
When not a breath did stir,—
So softly shone the moon above,—
And Romeo answered her.

Last night the queen of all the Nile
Saw Anthony afar,
And he much marveling the while
Mistook her for a star.

Last night my love's hand lay in mine,
Stars shone in eyes and hair,
Around the moonlit lover's shrine
We were the happiest there.

A LULLABY

THE sun is in the golden west,
Rest, baby, rest;
Cuddle up your little head
Close to mother's breast.

The chimney swallows lower sweep,
Sleep, baby, sleep;
Slumber in your nest of love,
Mother's baby sleep.

The stars are blinking in the sky,
Bye, baby, bye,
God is watching over all,
Baby, don't you cry.

ALL night the cricket chirps unto the moon,
Where slants her white light o'er the sleeping grove.
So, cricket like, my heart both late and soon,
Looks up to thee and chants, "I love, I love."

LITTLE HANDS

DEAR little hands, two twin and fragrant flowers,
Blown from God's garden whence the Spring doth
come,
I have but one grave fear for all the hours,
That God may come some day and take you home.

YOU

THE day is long that brings no sight of you,
And void the night whose dreams you run not through.

Oh, I had rather glimpse of your dear eyes
Than bask always in sight of heaven's skies.

For you are love, my life's eternal morn,
In whose fair light my second soul was born.

IDLE SIGHS

SOMETIMES he comes when the music is sweet,
Sometimes when the flowers bloom,
Sometimes with the rhythm of dancing feet,
When laughter is soft in the room.

This little old voice of idle sighs,
Whispering God knows what,
That troubles and starts the tears in my eyes
For the things that are and are not.

MA AND PA

WHILE ma sits on the porch at noon
An' knits a raveled stockin'
Pa sits close by an' hums a tune,
His big ol' arm cheer rockin'.
They git to lookin' far away.
An' ma she talks of Benny,
Of school, of youth, of work, of play,
An' pa he talks of Jenny,—
Of things that happened long ago;
For pa is goin' on eighty years
An' ma is seventy-two.

Ma laughs a while an' then she sighs:
For Tom he went to Texas,

An' Jenny in the graveyard lies
Where care no more perplexes.
Then pa he wipes his dim old eyes
An' talks about the weather,
An' when no clouds are in the skies
They walk an' talk together
Of things that happened long ago,
'Fore pa was goin' on eighty years
An' ma was seventy-two.

Pa brings her flowers from the wood,
Or weeds the pinks an' roses,
While ma she talks a steady flood
An' plans of things proposes.
Ah, many a rose has lost its bloom
That glowed in gardens sunny,
Many a dear heart holds the tomb,
One time so gay and bonny.
Their friends are gray and very few,
Since pa is goin' on eighty years
An' ma is seventy-two.

I've heard pa tell some stories quaint,
An' friends he spoke of many,
But never yet have heard complaint
Of one who wronged him any.
An' oftentimes, vexed with assaults
Of things, I sit and wonder
If in those days fond friends were false
Or tongues had learned to slander,
Or if they all were good an' true
'Fore pa was goin' on eighty years
An' ma was seventy-two.

They trod the way that we must go:
They had their joy an' sorrow.

Our steps will be unsure an' slow
Like pa's and ma's to-morrow.
But should we gain the soul of peace
As they have done, by givin'
The best they had, by God's good grace
We shall not tire of livin'
But mellowed be in heart an' true,
When I am goin' on eighty years
An' you are seventy-two.

AUNT JANE'S CHAIR

UNCLE JOHN don't seem to keer
For nothin' any more.
He sets aroun' an' smokes his pipe,
Or stands up in the door
An' looks off down the Natchez road
With eyes grown mighty sad,
An' mutters to himself a while
An' shakes his gray ol' head.

An' ev'ry day at milkin' time
When dark is gittin' near,
He goes an' sets there by himself
An' looks at Aunt Jane's cheer.
An' when the whippoorwills begin
To holler in the woods,
He takes her cheer inside as if
'Twas all his earthly goods.

When folks have lived for forty years,
Like her an' Uncle John,
I reckon life ain't so much fun
When one of 'em is gone.
I reckon it's that he's thinkin' of,
An' her that's dead a year,

When settin' there all by himself
Lookin' at Aunt Jane's cheer.

There's mighty few who notice him,
The children all provoke,
The very puppy at his heels
Think's Uncle John's a joke.
An' yet he never speaks them cross,
But does the best he may,
Doin' the chores about the house,
An' puttin' things away.

Sometimes he tries to work again,
But finds he's in the way,
An' gives it up to feed the pigs,
Or throw the cow some hay,
Then back he goes, his shoulders bent,
In lonesomeness severe,
To watch another long day through,
An' Aunt Jane's empty cheer.

THE WORLD'S STANDARD

No matter what you are, lad,
Though brave and kind and bonny,
The world won't love you much, lad,
Unless you hold its money.

The kindly deeds you do, lad,
Although it takes to do them,
Your precious blood and life, lad,
This world may make you rue them.

Success means silver slugs, lad,
You'll find that men affect you
In wealth, and in distress, lad,
They cannot e'en respect you.

Your heart is good as gold, lad,
Your smile so bright and sunny
Is gift enough for me, lad,
But this cold world wants your money.

HELP ME TO DO THE BEST I CAN

God of this wonderful world and the stars,
Thou who didst teach with Thy own hand
The beauty of toil, its dignity,
And didst place Thy tools at our command,

Guide me to fashion along Thy plan,
To better, as Thou, my fellow-man,
Show me the work Thou meant'st for me,
And help me to do the best I can.

THE DREAMS THAT COUNT

It isn't the dreams you dream, boy,
It's the dreams you make come true,
That counts in the hands of women and men
That are reaching out to you.

The dreamer who lives forever, boy,
Was the weariest man on this earth,
For he toiled 'til he'd worked his soul in his
dreams.
And we took it for what it was worth.

No, it isn't the dreams you dream, boy,
They are guides that urge you to do —
It's the labor, the waiting, the will of a god,
That makes those dreams come true.

THE MOCKING-BIRD SAID

THE mocking-bird said unto the rose,
"It is Spring, it is Spring, it is Spring,
And Love is knocking at my little heart,
While I sing, while I sing, while I sing."

The mocking-bird said unto the stem,
"It is June, it is June, it is June.
My babies have found their wings and flown
Too soon, too soon, too soon."

The mocking-bird said unto the thorn,
"You are bold, you are bold, you are bold,
But my little heart is frightened and lone,
It is cold, it is cold, it is cold."

AND ONCE HE DIES

I LAUGHED, for Love had come, and then
With more of pain and less delight —
His ways hurt sore — with angry mien
I drove him from my sight.

But Love is such a tender sprite,
An unkind word his death may be,
And once he dies, in day or night,
There's naught so dead as he.

Spider like o'er sulking sea
The day crawled up with evil eye,
And all my life he spits at me,
Because I let Love die.

THE PYRES OF THE ETERNAL

WHO would guess that here in this musty old
 room,
With its office chairs and its need of a broom,
By a dim old alley, half lit above
From a skylight — Who would guess that love
Had found a way and come in with a trace
Of Spring and the sketch of a woman's face?

I smell the flowers on bush and vine;
I name them and all delights are mine.
Your lips have touched them; they are yours,
 and I
Surely can never let them die.

Could a light step break the quiet of these halls —
Again, would you guess that these bare walls
Could fall away and these dusty rooms
And this alley — that the rarest blooms
Of the rarest days had the naïve art
To come here with their perfume and challenge
 my heart?

You and I, when yesterday was to-day,
And the wonder of light and color lay
On the pastures, we linked hands and seemed
To live forever in the dreams we dreamed.

The birds are singing again — I know
They are, but I hear them not, for the low
Soft music of a woman's words
From a woman's throat and lips make the birds
Seem like a dream, and the fields and all
Like a dream, and the voice is the only thing real.

The dear, dear days that fall from the bush
Of the wind-blown year and lose their blush
Are around me, on my lips the desire
Of a kiss. In my heart love's delicious fire.

Oh, the cramming thus of the infinite
In a limited body that is not fit
To contain the passions of a worm!
I hold you in spirit and lovely form
As close as life — Yet distance and the breath
Of Fate has removed you far as death.

I hold you, Love, I pray to you,
I worship you as the fathers do
Their saints. I kiss your garments, do your feet
Feel my arms? Are you there, my love, my
sweet?

The smoke and setting sun and red fires
Are in the west, burning time, the pyres
Of an eternal. Do you smell the rare
Fine flavor of things that burn there?
How the saturated air and the smokes
From the fire interweave through the druid oaks?

Give me your hand and let us say,
We do not care, so we live to-day,
If all we borrowed from time goes up
In the flames, they have burned an empty cup.

We drank it dry and cast it aside,
We will not let our hearts abide
A single pang. We sit here rapt,
Wondering, but greatly handicapped,
For our bodies creep while our spirits fly —
Yet this of yours I would not have to die.

It is more than human, it is divine,
This body of yours, and woven as fine
As the veins of the flowers, as rare as the blue
Of the sky with the stars running through.

But the shape of your soul is the shape of you,
By eternal hands carved perfect and true.
And we shall come together at last;
Burned one through love by the mighty blast
Of the pyres eternal blazing through space
To show us the soul of each face to face.

THE LOVE OF THE BROOK

"THE birds are gone," said the brook.
And she ran away to follow
The sun and sky and swallow,
Past many a pleading look.

The great pines begged her to stay,
On the hilltops silently sighing,
But a thousand bright things were dying,
So the brook kept on her way.

To the south all day she ran,
Conversing in anxious whispers
With the showers and clouds her sisters
By wild haunts and the homes of man.

And man, his grain all stored,
Toil worn, at hard-earned leisure,
Saw the stream and took its measure,
Built a dam where the swift brook flowed.

The brook recoiled from the wall,
So hasty she'd been and a-quiver

To be off to a southern river,
She had used not her eyes at all.

How she eddied around and around,
Ran back, but no hope behind her,
And forward, but the wall didn't mind her;
It was hard, and firm as the ground.

So the sun went off with all song,
And she and a card'nal together,
And a thrush that cared for no weather,
Remained the whole winter long.

Then the limbs grew bare as the wind,
And wailed for their summer cover,
And the wild geese flying over
Called out to the phalanx behind.

The farmer with his swinging light,
Made haste to his fire and pillow,
But the little brook under the willow
Froze hard and fast that night.

One day a cardinal bold
Flew up on the branch of a cherry,
His song was so blithe and merry
That a blue-eye dared out in the cold.

And some daffodils doffed their hoods
And held up their sunny faces
In a hundred hidden places;
And a violet bloomed in the woods.

And the mill pond,— the brook was now one,
Wore a dazzling sparkle of dimples
Reflecting the willow's wimples,
For the snow clouds had dropped in the sun.

Said the brook, "I hear notes of spring,
And last night, if I am not mistaken,
A musk of apple was shaken
From the boughs by the whippoorwill's wing."

So saying, she peeped o'er the wall
And saw the deep meadows below her
Beginning to leaf and to flower.
Said her children, "We hear the sea call."

So a drop slipped over quite well,
And dozens of others came after,
'Til the chimes of their happy laughter
Rang back from each flower bell.

So the mill pond chattered all day
With never a thought to grow lonely,
And she found that she had not only
To laugh as before and be gay.

The wheel must be turned and the trout
Must eat, in the meadows the flowers
Would have died with only the showers;
So she'd plenty to think about.

But the sweetest blossom that grew
By the pond in sun or leaf bower,
Was a fragrant red and white flower
In a graceful birch canoe.

Adele was the name of the flower,
The mill's light and miller's daughter,
Each assiduous season had brought her
Some token, some eloquent dower.

Were hers the winter's pure snows,
Eyes of spring with their early beaming,

In her hair old autumn tints gleaming,
And all through her the blood of the rose.

Her the brook reflected with pride,
And the waters were always brightest
And danced and caroled lightest
When Adele roamed the brook beside.

Said the brook, "Sweet maid, I am thine,
Thou art more than the rose or the lily;
Their red and white would show illy
By the cheek of you, maiden mine."

Said the brook, "Take my trout where they
shine,
Row thy boat about on my bosom
All day, all night and blossom
In the sun and moon, I am thine."

And the maiden looked down with a blush
That glowed in the water descending,
And the blue with the cardinal blending
Would have beggared an artist's brush.

"Be mine," said the brook. "Be mine,"
But the maiden breathlessly listened
While her eyes grew bright and glistened
Till the picture was painting divine.

For out where the woodland began,
Where wrestled the daisy and clover,
She heard the voice of her lover,
Bold Rowland who cared for no man.

She smiled a mischievous smile
As she sent the small boat spinning
Where the lilies to bloom were beginning,
Said she, "He can search for a while."

Then the pond grew black as its perch
And scowled at the gallant young stranger,
But the maid unconscious of danger
Kept whispering, "Search, Mister, search.

"He loves me, he loves me not,
If he do, he will find me wherever
I be, though drowned in the river,
His heart would show him the spot."

She saw his gay eyes cloud,
His hopefulness change to worry
As he turned from the mill in a hurry
His head held not so proud.

"How stupid!" she said to the stream;
Her smile in a thought cloud fading
That spread with the softest shading
To her eyes and colored their beam.

She saw his broad shoulders dip
Where the cedars in sunset were burning,
And the maid in the birch boat yearning
Felt a tremulous droop in her lip.

And then she straightened and bent
Her paddle, the water scarce skimming,
Yet the birch bark gracefully swimming,
Swiftly with a swan's poise went.

Then turbulent grew the breast
Of the water, the birch bark shuddered,
As if sudd'nly in sand imbedded,
And sank to the water's crest.

Then up from the trembling prow,
Ere the maid had space to wonder,

Cleaving the water asunder
From top to the very slough,

A mist form cold as a cloud
While the sun is yet in China,
Arose and began to entwine her
With arms that were like a shroud.

“Rose red as a ruby, and sky blue
And snow white, my lily sister,”
Belllike it murmured and kissed her,
“My spirit is lonely for you.”

Swift the red flew back to the heart
Of the maid; like the moon in May-time
When her light is a dim pearly day-time,
The height and perfection of art.

So a moment she 'rose and shone,
Then down in the blue of the billow,
Deep under the shade of the willow,
She passed to her sister's throne.

And now, any night when the rats
At the rotten mill planks are cutting,
And out from under the jutting
Old eves fly the sleepy bats —

When the buds with the night dew are wet,
You can hear the maiden call “Rowland”
So sweetly over the lowland,
To the love that has not found her yet.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

EGYPT is dark, the palms are asleep.

There is no light, and deep

Is unknown to deep.

A voice is whispering, "Whither" and
"why?"

Will the darkness answer or some deep reply?

Men are there with their candles wondering,

Seeing a little way:

Patriarchs and prophets, looking for a day.

"The river Styx is around us," men cry;

So they drink, and drunken they die.

And men pray and they die.

And the deeps rock and thunder and are rest-
less.

"Let us live," men cry and drink,

And drink the cup and turn it down.

And lo! the hall is silent, for the guest is gone.

The dust is on the table and the cup

Is down and none to turn it up,

Or fill again with wine.

A skull is with the earth-worm for a sign.

Why does man beget man to suffer?

The life is not worth the death.

Has pain ever been in its sheath?

Even pleasure when it makes its little round

And comes back like a boomerang,

Has a point and leaves a wound.

We were around the table

Eating and drinking, and one by one

The eyes of the feasters closed,

And they were feasted upon.

We burned some and others we buried.

And the feast was a great fun'ral feast;
While the acrid rust
Bit in the hinges, the sleepers were dust.

And so you remember
It was in December,
You propounding the riddle —
Where a million stars were shining and had
been —

On the backs of our sleeping sheep the sheen
Of the moon. We fell in a waste of silence.
So we sat. Of a sudden upsprang,
Gazing up, clutching hands, scarce breathing,
In our tortured souls the pang
Of the unaccountable.
We huddled together,
Seeing the unseen,
Fearing to feel the snap
Of understanding, fearing the clap
Of a thund'rous bolt projected from the sky
Disturbed with too much light.
So mistrusting our sight
We bent, huddled together, reading the sky
Each in his way.
Still the sheep were lying
Undisturbed, plain as day;
Still asleep, but for the crying
Of a baby lamb for its mother.

Taking breath from our first surprise,
You ventured, "This is not as it should be."
In a whisper you said it —
How alone we were, we three —
Afraid to live or die,
Body and soul contending to hide.
Then, between a half heart beat, the sky
Rang like a harp string drawn and released,

And the circling heavens from east
To west clamored with melody.
Like brothers of Jacob we stood —
With our eyes saw the glory of God,
Like light bursting out of chaos,
Or song from the tree boughs.
Angel forms and music divine
Charmed our fear into peace —
We had asked for a sign,
And the angels were at the place
Of our elbows, singing "Hosannas!"
And the star there at Bethlehem.

Then we went, we three, heads hung low,
Saw the Child. And again on the bough
With the thorns, and the spear in His Heart
Rending His body and soul apart,
And His Mother holding the foot of the bloody
cross,
Holding the nails while the thousands cursed
Him!

CHRISTMAS

WHEN the cock begins to crow
Ev'ry hour of the night,
"Cock-a-doo-dle-do!"
With all his lusty might:

We know what he's trying to say
While in the blankets we lie,
"Christmas, Christmas day
Is getting very nigh."

"Apple pies, apple pies, apple pies!
Old goose a-browning too,

And gobbler closing his eyes,
Cock-a-doo-dle-do!"

"My fat hen for a salad has gone,
And I am feeling mighty blue
On this cold old roost alone,
Cock-a-doo-dle-do!"

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY Christmas! joy and laughter
Now be yours and all hereafter;
Sorrow come not near you,
Want need never fear you,
But a plenteous board and a merry word
Be ever near to cheer you.

Heart as strong and hope as plenty,
Make your ninety years like twenty,
Let your last December
Not one care remember,
Till the lone clear call on your ear shall fall,
Till life dies to an ember.

CHRISTMAS TIME

PA says I goes to bed with the chickens.
Speck I do; can't do nothin' no-how.
If I pinches Bess, she'll holler,
An' then pa he'll kick up a row.

Can't do nothin'; can't stand on my head even.
If I kicks over a stick of wood
Or a cheer, ma c'mences tellin' how Santy
Don't bring things to boys what ain't good.

So I goes to bed as soon as dark an', jimminy!
I jest haves the bestest dreams
'Bout Santy Clause an' his sled an' reindeers,
But sometimes I wakes up an' mos' screams.

'Cause I knows I hears him come down the chimney,
An' I wrops up my head an' years
Tell he's gone, but I wouldn't call ma for nuthin'
'Cause I might skeer his reindeers.

An' then he couldn't never come at Christmas.
I reckon he'll bring me a gun
This time; anyhow, I sho' do want one;
Jimminy, wouldn't I have fun!

Bet you can't guess what I did last Christmas —
Pa said Santy was gittin' old
An' needed stimulatatin', he reckoned,
So's he wouldn't ketch cold.

So I got pa to give me a half dollar,
An' I buyed,— bet you can't guess,—
I buyed me a great big bottle of whisky,
An' wrote on it Santy's address,

An' tied it up by a string in the chimney,
An' he dranked it every bit;
Sho' did, an' he brought me mo' things than
ever —
A cross-bow an' tools an',— I fergit

What else he brought me; an' yes, some fire-crackers
An' sump'n else, an' pa said
He specked Santy sho' did lak that whisky.
He dranked it, so I speck he did.

I wish Christmas would come ev'ry Sunday,
Instid of onct ev'ry year.
Pa says we wouldn't have no school time
If it did, but I wouldn't keer.

Tom Tucker said he'd be sorry,
I know he's a story, though.
He jest said that 'cause he's stuck on the
teacher,—
He sho' is, 'cause he told me so.

I ain't got no girl but ma. I had measles
'Thanksgivin', an' couldn't eat
No turkey; couldn't eat nothin', 'cause I frowd
up,
An' ma made cake an' mince-meat.

Us got twelve cakes iced fer Christmas.
Ma sho' kin make good cakes.
Can't nobody make cake better'n ma, I reckon.
I kin eat 'em till I jest aches.

I'ms goin' to hang up my stockin' to-morrow
'Fore dark, 'cause it's Christmas night
An' I'm goin' to put out the fire an' cover
Up an' shut my eyes tight,

So's he kin come down the chimney early.
Us gits up an' 'zamines our toys
'Bout two o'clock on Christmas mornin'—
Has mo' fun an' makes mo' noise.

Pa calls us owls an' bats, but ma hollers
Jest lak us, an' laughs. Us don't keer
What pa says, though, 'cause us does nearly
Anything when Christmas is here.

This year I bet I ketch Aunt Susan.
She caught me last year; sho' did,
An' I had to give her an apple an' orange,
She wus down in the kitchen hid.

Aunt Susan's our cook, her chilluns gits peanuts
An' stick candy. They's lack a smoke stack —
That's 'cause; an' Santy Clause don't lack niggers,
I'ms sho' glad that I ain't black.

I don't want no teddy bear, lak Bee Bobbins,
'Cause I ain't no Yankee, me,
An' pa says teddy bears are fer Yankees,
I'ms a rebel, I can whoop Bee.

THE FALLEN ROSE

AH, rose, what a throne hadst thou!
Glinting gold; it was thine.
So red thou wast and proud,
There was no rose so fine!

Fair fingers enthroned thee one eve;
In thy pride thou didst rise
Like a bright star that comes from the east
Into daffodil skies.

So the garden envied thee, yes;
Thou didst scorn the whole bed,—
Thou didst shed all thy beauty
On this glorious head,

Thy throne. Men came on tiptoe
To worship and bare
Thy thorns in their hearts when they went
From fairest to less fair.

Thou wast pitiless, a plumed peacock.
Thou didst rustle with scorn,
And prick through the quick of their hearts
Ruthlessly with a thorn.

So much for thy pride thou art here,
A faded old rose.
If the garden could see thee now,
It would turn up its nose.

Now feel what others have felt.
Is there reason why I
Should not spurn thee and cast thee out
In the gutter to die?

Is this comfort? To-morrow at dawn
The same lady who threw
Thee aside shall come like the sun
Scattering the dew

In the garden, thy old sweet home,
And some bud there as fair
Eager as thou she shall pluck
And arrange in her hair.

See, here is her picture, fallen one.
Would a dead rose like thee
Sit well on that golden throne?
It were rank heresy

To say so. I'd not wear thee myself.
But for pity's sake
I shall hide thee away from the laughter
Thy sad plight would make.

And thou my teacher shalt be,
Lest as thine my dreams

Go flying away in the twilight
Like departing sunbeams.

She made thee her god for a while,
Thou wast king one whole day,
But now thou art down in the dirt;
That's a woman's way.

PEONIES

You will not come to me again,
I know you will not, the flowers
Are dead. I saw them die as the hours
Took them. Think you I did not complain?

It hurt me that you let them die so soon.
I tried to tell you, but pride
Said "Hush! she does not care." So I lied
And made my lips sing some false tune.

But now to-day when the peonies bloom,
And say, "Ah, she does not care."
My heart is dead, there is nothing there
But the dreams and dead flowers and empty
room.

I did not ask for any thing;
You hurt me—I did not ask,
Yet I sent the flowers, I made it their task
To speak while I was worshipping.

Do not deny; you knew what they said—
What else could the peonies say
When nursed by love and taught all day
The language of love, till their petals blushed
red?

When the days are full of idleness
And the unseen wood-nymphs with sips
Of last year's wines from buds at our lips
Make us sad; and some remembered caress

Of eyes or hands is dreamt of and cast
In the deep wells of our souls and burned
Like phosphorus, remember I have turned
To thee always, to thee first and last.

THE FLOWER THAT TURNS TO GOLD

You kin talk of purple vi'lets,
An' sing about yo' rose,
But de cream cup flower of cotton
Am de purties' thing dat grows.

When de boss is fig'rin 'vancements,
An' 'lowin' on de crap,
I loves to see it bloomin'
An' see de blossoms drap.

Ef I'd 'a' been King Solomon
Wid de wimmins he had to hoe,
I'd 'a' made a record breaker,
An' never worked no mo'.

Kase cotton am de flower
Dat's sho' to turn to gol'
When de vi'lets an' de roses
Am rotten wid de col'.

HUMANITARIANISM

WHAR you g'win' wid dat mule, Salvation?
'Lowed 'twas one o'clock, you say?
Look here, nigger, I's *told* you, ain't I,
Dat de trouts was bitin' to-day?

Turn dat mule out dar in de cow-pen,
An' fotch me dat hook an' line.
Dem dogwoods looks lak cotton,
An' dat's a mighty good sign.

Dat mule's been plowin' since seben,
An' he's got to *have some* res'.
Ain't nothin' g'win' to work etern'ly
An' do his lebel bes'.

De boss ain't ver' likely
To be comin' out dis here late,
But *ef* he do, you tell him
I's patchin' de pastur' gate.

TRYSTING SONG

DAT pusillanimous raskil
Is on de highes' lim'.
I reckon he thinks no nigger
Ain't half as smart as him.

You kin squat on dar, ol' rooster,
But maybe bye-m-bye,
'Twont make a bit of diff'rence
Wheder you's low or high.

You don't 'pear to be oneasy,
While you's settin' up dar so snug:

Dat some day I mout be flyin'
'Roun' dat tree lak a juny bug.

When I gits me one of dem airy-plins
An' comes sailin' through de sky,
You'll think I's a great big black hawk,
An' dat you's a chicken pie.

THE NIGGER THAT BUSTED THE LEVEE

Ah went down to Lou'siana, by de river, Ah did,
With a dime 'n er ol' pair of dice;
We was settin' dar, watchin' de steamboats pass
Whar de logs was warm an' nice.

An' lot of us niggers was settin' dar,
When Ah took out my bones to play.
"Dem dices is wuff a railroaid to me,"
Ah said, jes' dat ver' way.

Den Richard he retch in his pocket, he did,
An' he pulled out a dollar bill,
An' de money what come from dem niggers'
jeans
Could of bought a whisky still.

At dat Ah pulled out mah rusty dime
An' hilt it jes' dat ver' way,
An' dem niggers hollered fit to kill,
Lak I was too po' to play.

Well den Ah laid lak a copper bellied snake;
Ef a cullud gent wants to git ahaid
Of Mose Lacey Ebenezer Johnston,
He's got to take a mouty good lead.

“ Ah’s got a hoss up in de hills,” Ah said,
“ An’ ef you gentlemens wants to throw,
(You know dat hoss of mine, Richard Veal),
Ah’s willin’ to let ’im go.”

Yas, Richard Veal sho’ did know dat hoss,
All dese niggers knows him up here,
Got a haid lak a cow, an’ sparse in de ribs,
But he kin run lak a bob tailed deer.

Well, sur, Ah throw’d dem dices, Ah did,
Ah don’t keer how Ah throws;
Ah’s been throwin’ so long dat seben comes
When Ah whistles jes’ lak hit knows.

A’ter dat dem gemmens jes’ throwed an’ throwed,
An’ dey luck kep’ gittin’ wuss,
An’ mah jeans was loaded wid nickels an’ dimes
Tell Ah feared dey was g’win’ to bus’.

A’ter while ol’ Sandy Clause he lowed,—
Ah never did lak dat coon,
He’s one of dese psalm-singin’ niggers, he is,
An’ allers howlin’ out of chune —

He ’lowed, “ Ol’ Mose is cheatin’ us boys,
He’s got a bone hid up his sleeve.”
An’ dem niggers got so powerful hot,
Dat Ah thought hit was time to leave.

An’ Sandy Clause went in his house, he did,—
His house right dar by de riv’r —
An’ he come out ag’in wid his shotgun an’ ’lowed
He was g’win’ to punctur’ mah liv’r.

At dat Ah moved up de roaid, Ah did,
Runnin’ jes’ dat ver’ way;

Ol' Sandy Clause was mad, an' all dem coons,
An' Ah wasn't g'win' to stay.

An' lordy, dat nigger jes' shot inter me,
Lak Mose Lacy warn't more'n a squir'l;
Well folks, Ah sho' did move a'ter dat,
Ah jes' passed away in a whirl.

Case dem shots kivered me all over, dey did.
Dey was rale number fo' size lead,
Ah heerd dem things comin' lak bees,
An' hittin' me all over de haid.

Ah ain't g'win' back to dat river no mo'
'Case Ah heerd how ol' Sandy Clause,
Done 'lowed he'd kill me sho's Ah did,
In spite of all de laws.

Don't think 'kase Ah lives up here in de hills,
Dem dices can't drap on sev'n;
Ef de preacher knowd, lak dis nigger do,
He could throw dem dices for heav'n.

THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS

YOUNG massa's dead up in Virginny,
Buried by de riv'r side.
Yassir, boss, an' dis ver' nigger,
'Twas hilt him when he died.

Dat man wasn't skeered of de devil, no sah.
He'd laugh jes' lak hit was fun,
When he hyeard dem bullits flyin' aroun'
An' mos' of de mens wanted to run.

Dar wasn't a gin'ral in all of de war
What could stand longside of de boss

When he rid at dem Yanks in front of his men
Settin' straight on his big roan hoss.

'Twas at what dey calls de Wilderness fight,
Dem bullits 'menced zoonin' by,
Drappin' all aroun', kerpap in de dus',
Lak rain from out of de sky.

Well, Ah was hid lak in dese bushes here,
An' prayin'. Lord, didn't Ah pray?
Over yonder was de Yanks, a big black snake;
An' Mars John over dis here way.

When a cannon-ball drapped in de bresh close by
Wid a roar lak jedgmen' day,
An' Ah riz from dat place lak a wilderness hog
An' fairly zooned away.

But Ah thought of young Missus away back home
Cryin' all day for Mars John,
An' of how she done begged me dat day when us lef'
To take keer of him when us was gone.

Ah ain't g'win' to lie, Ah was skeered, boss,
De skeer was in all of mah bones;
Dar was bullits flyin' as thick as bees,
An' de air full of dead folks' groans.

When Ah crawled up close to whar de calv'ry fit,
Dey was comin' down de line
Trot! trot! Mars John ridin' in front,
Ah tell you hit looked mouty fine.

Hit 'peared to light'n an' thunder in front,
An' de peoples jes' drapped all aroun'
Lak robins; an' hosses an' mens stretched out,
'Peared to kiver de hull of de groun'.

But de oders rid on, an' Mars John rid too.
Den anoder roar wuss 'n de fus',
Hit 'pears to me lak de whole of de worl'
Was loaded 'n g'win' to bus'.

But Ah kep' watchin' Mars John, Ah did,
An' Ah seed de big roan rare,
Wid his head throw'd back to de saddle-horn
An' his front feet pawin' de air.

Den he fell kerflop! straight back on his back;
But de sojers jes' rid right on;
Anoder big man got out in front,
An' dey rid away from Mars John.

Ah ain't never know'd how Ah done hit, boss;
But Ah forgot all about dat war —
All Ah know'd was Massa was dyin'
An' one of his niggers was dar.

Ah histed him in mah arms an' run
Tell de worl' was all turnin' 'roun';
Hit 'peared lak mah laigs would break at de knees
An' Ah drapped lak a log to de groun'.

Ah prayed a while an' den called Mars John,
Ah was plum gone wil' from de jar.
A'ter while Mars John kinder opened his eyes,
Den he looked an' seed Ah was dar.

He was weak as a baby den, he was,
An' Ah seed dat he wanted to speak,
So Ah up an' hilt mah black woolly haid
Down close to his high born cheek.

"Ah'm dyin', Alf," he jes' whispered hard.
"Tell de Missus, Alf, how Ah died;

Take keer of her, Alf, won't you — Oh, God ——”
But Ah ain't said nothin', jes' cried.

Den he put one his arms roun' mah neck, he did,
An' hugged me jes' lak Ah was white.
“ You's a good boy, Alf. Tell de Missus Ah said —
You'll be free,” he whispered, “ to-night.”

Lawdy, boss, dat speech went plum to mah heart;
God knows Ah didn't want to be free;
Ah jes' wanted Mars John to be well ag'in,
An' back in Miss'ippi wid me.

Den his arm got limber. “ Tell de Missus, Alf ——”
He ain't never finished dat speech;
'Case de angels done come an' took Mars John
Over yonder whar de prophets preach.

Dat's de las' of de war dat Ah was in, boss.
An' now Missus is ol' an' gray.
An' Ah's a-humpin' along on a stick jes' now,
Mouty close to jedgmen' day.

An' hit won't be long 'fo' Ah'm over dar,
An' waitin' on Massa once mo',
An' hustlin' aroun' for a good warm dram
In de mornin' when he opens de do'.

A'TER DE HARVES'

WHOA, gee, Riley!
Come on dar, cow, you's a-g'win' down hill,
Dar ain't no mo' cotton for to pick;
Dar ain't no mo' totin' for you's oxen to do;
Ah's done give dat ar crap mah las' lick.

Come on, come on, Riley!

Come on dar, cow, you's got fodder to burn.

Ain't no Jew g'win' to git you, you bet;
So you needn't be trabblin' wid yo' haid hilt down
Lak dis nigger was swimmin' in debt.

Whoa, haw, Riley!

Dar ain't no mo' work, dar ain't no mo' work,

Tell de plantin' time to come nex' Spring;

Dar ain't nothin' on earth for a nigger to do

But court de gals an' cut de pigeon wing.

Whoa, gee, Riley!

Dat ar sun's a-settin' pleasin' lak to-day

'Pears to be smilin', for a fac',

Mos' lakly he's a-thinkin' of cotton rows in June,

He sho' got familiar wid mah back.

Whoa, dar, Riley!

Dar ain't no mo' work, dar ain't no mo' work,

For de Winter is sholy mos' here.

Ah kin loaf an' chaw an' nod by de fiah,

An' set in de bes' bottom cheer.

Git out of dat, Riley!

Dar's a hog in de pen, hit's a pyore razor back;

'Pears lak 't would weigh a right smaht.

Ah 'spec's Ah'll spatch him dis time Christmas eve

Fo' he ceasts from fat'nin' of de heart.

Git on, git on, Riley!

All de days is Saddys now for sho';

Wid a wagon load of 'taters in de stack

An' a big turkey gobbler loafin' at de door,

An' Trailer barkin' roun' de shack.

Back, back, Riley!

Dar ain't no mo' work, dar ain't no mo' work,

Ah's happy as a turkey in clover;
Ah feels lak a pig wid his belly full of corn.
Ah's happy from mah heart all over.

Come on, come on, Riley!
Dar's a light burnin' in de winder, ol' cow,
Us is done got to home at las',
Ah's sho' g'win' to res', for mah laigs is tired,
An' Ah's hongry as a crow on a fas'.

Whoa, whoa, Riley!
Ah' spec' de ol' 'oman has baked dat possum,
An' all dem kids is yellin' for a bite.
Ah's been eatin' Lot's wife tell mah stummic 'pears
cooked,
But hit's possum an' 'taters for to-night.

RICHARD ON POSSUM HUNTING

SOME folks is ver' parshal
To de fruitful Summer-time,
Jes' eatin' an' grinnin' an' sweatin'
Wid a million for a dime.

But Ah's here to tell you, honey,
When dem 'air craps is done,
An' de boss done lef' off 'spectin'
Dat's dis nigger's time for fun.

When de owl is estimatin'
De missus' guinea crap,
An' er-feelin' of dey gizzards,
So's not to 'sturb dey nap;

When dat moon gits lookin' col' lak,
An' de top of a nigger's nose

Is 'flicted wid de sniffles,
An' his feet is mos' nigh froze;

You whoops an' de smoke goes puffin'
Lak yo' mouf was a cotton gin,
An' de win' makes de pine trees shiver,
A nigger can sholy move den.

Den Ah takes mah horn from de stable,
Whar Ah hangs it when Winter's gone,
An' gee, de missus' pianny
Ain't never totch dat horn.

When Ah blows, you kin hear dem niggers
A-callin' on ev'ry hill;
An' Bell, she comes a-jumpin'
An' howlin' fit to kill;

An' Ruler barks an' scratches,
An' Dixie, a full-blood houn'
Dey's sholy sump'n comin'
When her smellers tetch de groun'.

Den us piles de straw an' lights hit,
An' makes a rousterin' fiah,
An' whoops when de trail gits warmer,
For us knows dey's gittin' nigher.

When de houn's c'mences whoopin'
Hit soun's lak kingdom come;
Jes' listen dem scoun'rels comin'
Say, boss, dey's movin' some.

Us hol's us breaf an' listens,
Twel dey seems to strack de tree;
Den us raises up lak pat'iges,
An' Ah spec's dat possum's for me.

Over hills an' hollers us tumbles,
Wid dat music in us years;
A-breakin' through de brambles,
Lak a dozen hustlin' steers.

Some 'spec's hit is a wil'-cat,
Some favors hit bein' a coon;
Some 'lows dem dogs is 'mented
An' is barkin' at de moon.

Us finds 'em in a holler,
A-makin' things jes' hum,
An' doin' of dey mighties'
To clam' a crooked gum.

An' all us comes a-jumpin',
An' cussin' jes' for fun;
One buil's de fiah wid pine straw,
One's handy wid de gun.

But when dey's tired of lookin',
An' says ain't nothin' dar,
An' 'spec's dem dogs runs ghos's,
An's barkin' at de air;

Ah says, " You niggers is 'mented,
You ain't no 'count no wise,
Jes' shet up an' quit yo' fussin'
An' Ah'll shine dat possum's eyes.

So Ah puts de fiah out keerful,
An' hol's mah torch up high,
An' shakes hit hin' mah shoulder,
Twell Ah gits dat rascal's eye.

Say, boss, dat's good as heaven,
To see dem big eyes shine,

An' Ah yells lak a wil' commanchee,
'Case Ah *knows* dat possum's mine.

Us cuts de tree lak playin'
An' hit draps in a little while,
An' when hit 'gins a-poppin',
Dem dogs jes' goes plum wil'.

An' don' us have to tussle,
To git dat raskil free,
While he jes' goes on grinnin',
An' don't never disagree.

Us splits a pole in de middle,
An' puts his tail inside,
An' pulls hit twell hit fastens,
An' hol's him hair an' hide.

Den us whoops up anoder,
Twell de night is mos' done gone;
When us blows dem dogs togeder,
Us sho' has had us fun.

RICHARD SELLS A CORD OF WOOD

WHUT' Ah 'spises mos'ly,
Is havin' dealins wid
A man whut'll 'spect a gemman
Of somp'n whut he ain't did.

Las' week de Cap'n axed me
To fetch him a cord of wood;
"An' min'," says he, "now, Richard,
Ah wants hit hard an' good."

Of course Ah tells him yassir,
Ah darsen't tell him no,
Dat 'ud put him in a tantrum,
An' make him mad for sho'.

Now when Ah comes to 'liver
Dat wood — hit sho' war *hard*,
Ash an' oak an' hick'ry,
Jes' lak he specifard.

Ah estimates percisely,
Jes' how much wood Ah's got,
An' goes to stack hit 'cordin'ly;
An' den he comes out hot.

“You woolly-haided scoundrel,”
Dat's jes' his ver' speech,
As red'n mad as a lobster
Dat's 'flicted wid de eetch;

“Call dat a cord of wood you ——”
Now whut dat white man said,
Ain't fit for any preacher
To carry in his haid.

Ah bows, apologizin'
“Ah measures by de stack,
An' ef hit don't look proper,
Ah'll give his money back.”

At dat he ain't said nothin'
But stahts to blow his nose,
A sign he's gittin' vi'lent,
An' calls his nigger Mose.

An' den dem two dey measures,
An' cords dat wood, an' Lord,

Hit mos' goes ag'inst believin',
Dar warn't a half a cord.

At dat Ah got oneasy
An' druv mah team away,
But now Ah's out of hearin'
An's g'win' to have mah say.

Ah ain't g'win' to have no dealin's
Wid sich a s'picious man,
A-fussin' lak dat wood was
A piece of timber lan'.

Ol' Richard mout be po'ly,
An' need de money bad,
But 'fo' he'd be dat staingy,
He'd live off meat an' bread.

An' ef de Cap'n wants hit,
Dat wood is dar to stay;
Hit ain't for me to arguy,
When white folks gits dat way.

RICHARD ON THE NEW RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

AH's got to be a-movin', boss.
Hit mus' be g'win' on ten,
An' Ah's got to pull de church bell,
So's to let de niggers in.

No, sah, Ah's jes' a deacon,
Ah ain't no preacher, sah.
Ah's fear'd de Lord ain't pleasin',
Wid dey doin's over dar.

Dey ain't got no 'ligious sperit,
De preachers of dese days;
Dey's took to follerin' Mammof,
As de prophet Isaias says.

Dat big black Ambrose nigger,
From up in Tenly town,
He jes' same as said, las' Sunday
He warn't preachin' for no crown.

"Ten dollars' wuf of preachin',"
Says he, swishin' his red cravat,
"An' you niggers be conspicuous,
When Ah sinds aroun' de hat."

Now, boss, dat ain't no 'ligion.
De evil sperit's about,
A-sowin' of dis harves'
Of scurreligious doubt.

Dar dat preacher's foolin' de niggers,
An' de deacon has to stay,
An' open an' close de meetin',
An' don't never git no pay.

Ah's tired of dat sort of 'ligion,
Whar he's got you up a tree,
An' barkin' to git yo' money,
Dat ain't de sperit for me.

But Ah's got to be a-movin', boss,
An' pull dat ol' church bell,
Or Ambrose'll be a-tellin'
How ol' Richard's gone to hell.

HARD TIMES

Now Ah'd lak to know what's de use of workin'!

Throw the disk to de devil an' lay down de plow.
De merchants all say dat dey won't 'vance a nigger,
An' dar ain't no use in us workin' no-how,
For de weevils is ru'nin' de lan'.

Dar's hard times comin' up de roaid somewhar.

Ah never seed de lak since Ah been born;
Dar's high water, no water, bugs in de taters,
Dar's worms in de cabbage an' mold in de corn,
An' de weevils is ru'nin' de lan'.

Two chilluns is down in bed wid de fever,

An' our ol' mule Jerry done broken his leg.
Hit looks lak de Lord's got down on a nigger,
'Cause he sholy took us livin' an' sont us out to beg;
An' de weevils is ru'nin' de lan'.

De win' come aroun' and blow'd down us stable,

An' de Jew come aroun' an' levied us cow,
An' de mink come aroun' an' taken us chickens,
An' we ain't got nothin' but some rags an' a row,
For de weevils is ru'nin' de lan'.

RICHARD'S PLEA FOR THE FOX

YASSIR, boss, dat-ar fox am good to eat —

Jes' look at dat nigger, he knows
Ah's got cotton to pick, an' see how he pokes —
Come on wid dat knife, Ambrose!

Dar's folks in dis worl' dat fox am deceib

By treein' a hen lak a dog.

But dat barkin' can't make him no mo' of a houn'
Dan mah gruntin' kin make me a hog.

De fox am close kin to de fambly of coon,
Which he 'sembles right smaht in his ways.
He ain't skercely no kin to de dog at all,
'Bout de sebenteens cousin, Ah says.

Yassir, boss, Ah sho' eats ev'ry fox Ah kin ketch,
'Kase he beats mos' all of de meats;
But den, you see, boss, Ah's keerful, Ah is,
'Bout the parts of de fox Ah eats.

Ah throws 'way de haid an' de two hin' laigs,
'Case de dog hit am cent'red in dar,
But de res', hit b'longs to de fox an' de coon,
An' sweet as a possum hit are.

DINAH'S HAUNT

DE win' hit cries in de middle of de night
Lak a baby an' de dog he moans,
An' de scritch owl hollers, Oh, Lord, oh, Lord!
'Cause Dinah is a bag of bones.

She's walkin' on de floor — list'n dem planks creek,
She's dar in dat corner by de bed.
See dat fiah, ain't hit skerry — whut's dat at de do'?
Dat's he hant, dat's Dinah whut's dead.

D'you see dat face at de winder, dar?
Bless Gawd, dat do' ain't shet.
Hit's op'nin', hit's op'nin', Hallelujah!
Lord, come git Dinah's sper't!

DE TIMES IS MOUTY DRY

OH, Marster, kin you give yo' 'tention
To dis lowly cullud man?
An' ef it's wrong, Ah ax you pardon;
O Lord, you understan'.

You knows we isn't sinful minded,
We does our level bes',
We labors in de Marster's vineyard
Wid mouty little res'.

Ef 'twas de Fo'th or jes' Thangsgivin',
Ah wouldn't have no say,
Ah'd low, "O Lord, jes' use yo' judgmen',"
But dis is Christmas day.

You 'member, Lord, down dar in Cana,
When de State was g'win' dry,
You took an' made some wine from water,
In de twinklin' of an eye.

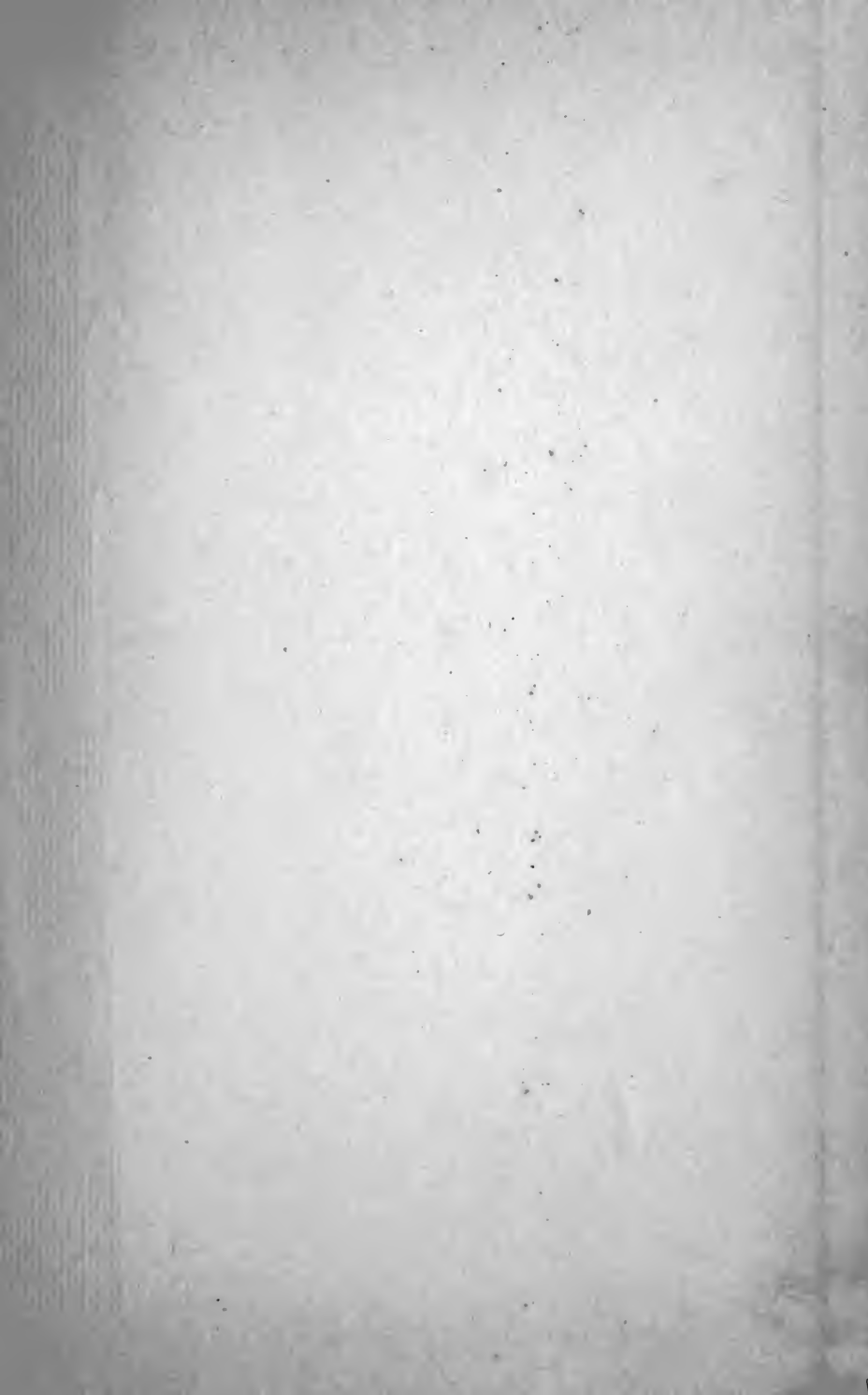
Now what us humble cullud pussons
Is axin you to do,
Ain't lak ef we'd 'a' come an' seeched you
To work a mack'rel too.

Lord, ef you see dat steamer *Natchez*
'Twixt here an' ol' Yazoo,
Ah'd take hit as a pusson'l favor,
Ef you'd fotch hit into view.

De table hit am sot an' ready,
Dat gobbler's full of fun,
But all de liquor's up de river;
O Lord, thy will be done.

THE END

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